

GOVIND BALLABH PANT

Govind Ballabh Pant

A Symposium Presented On His Sixtieth Birthday

Edited By

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I have great pleasure in presenting this volume to the public on the occasion of the sixtieth birthday of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. My grateful thanks are due to all the distinguished contributors who have given me the articles for this book. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant is a beloved leader of the province and is widely respected by the people. In this book the readers will find various aspects of Pandit Pant's personality. I am thankful to Mr Shanker Pillai, India's famous cartoonist, for the sketch he has drawn for this book. I am obliged to Mr Kavindra Shekhar Uprety of the Government Intermediate College, Almora, for the ungrudging co-operation he gave me in preparing this volume. I must thank Pandit Devi Datt Joshi of Dania, Almora, for some original pictures that I got from him for this book.

The book suffers from some faults, but for them all I alone am responsible.

B. K. Tiwari

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काशी हिन्दू विश्वविद्यालय ।

प्रकाशक :
दिनांक १०-८-६६

संस्कृत ३५ गोविन्द बल्लभ पन्त के प्रति आदर प्रकट करने : के लिए जो पुस्तक निकालने का प्रस्ताव है, मैं उसका स्वागत करता हूँ। मैं जानता हूँ कि यह पुस्तक है। उनके व्यक्तिगत जीवन की नींव होगी, तभी, स्वच्छता और सच्चर शीलता पर है - उनके साथ वैशाली और स्वामी लोग ने उनके जीवन पर तथा का नेत्र ला दिया है। जैसे व्यक्तिगत जीवन में, जैसे ही साहित्यिक जीवन में, जो भी इनके साथ आया है, उसने इनके इन गुरुओं पर : आदर किया है, मेरी ईश्वर से आर्पण है कि वह इसे दीर्घायु से और नीरोग रखे जिन्होंने देश के आम लोगों के हितों में देश के नवयुवकों को इनके ज्ञान और अनुभव का लाभ मिल सके।

२६ अगस्त १९६६

MESSAGE

FROM

The late Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

The following message was given by the late Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya only a few days before his death. The late Panditji was seriously ill and no visitor was allowed to have his 'darshan'; but the deep love and affection which he had for Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant found expression in these memorable words.

Prayag

Dated 1-8-'46.

I welcome the move to bring out a presentation volume in honour of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. I have known Pandit Pant for a very long time. His personal life is based on simplicity, truthfulness, purity and tolerance—and patriotism and selflessness have added lustre to it. Whoever came in his contact, whether in private or in public life, has admired these qualities in him. I pray for his long life and sound health so that the youth of the country may benefit by his wisdom and experience during the eventful days to come.

MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA



Foreword

I am honoured by the invitation to say a few words about Sri Govind Ballabh Pant, the Premier of the United Provinces. Though I do not claim to know him as well as many of the distinguished contributors to this volume, I have enough respect and admiration for his great ability, patriotism and public spirit to justify my responding to this invitation. I have been living in his province for some years and have seen him at work in the Constituent Assembly. (He is a great parliamentarian with strong convictions and can present his case with skill and ability. From his appearance one would infer not only a certain tenacity of purpose but also a disarming naivety which is more apparent than real. I understand that his sweet temper and commonsense have been mainly responsible for keeping together the heterogeneous elements of the United Provinces Congress Party. The spirit of toleration and understanding of other points of view than one's own is essential for the successful working of democratic institutions and Pantji possesses this spirit in an abundant degree.)

In the difficult days ahead of us, when politics ceases to be a game of opposition and becomes the

responsible task of government and administration, when we have to raise the level of efficiency a hundred per cent we require men of honesty and ability. It is our good fortune that we have in the front rank of our leaders today, men of the stature of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant to guide us.

NEW DELHI,
29th August, 1947.

S. Radhakrishnan

THE BELOVED LEADER

(By Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit)

It has become customary when writing about an outstanding public figure, to use superlatives and dwell at length on his achievements and noble qualities.

This seems to me rather a cheap way of paying tribute to those one desires to honour, and so I shall not follow the conventional custom by giving an account of Govind Ballabh Pant's activities. I would prefer to present him to my readers as a human being, for it is this human quality about him which is mainly responsible for his success in life and for the fact that he is loved by so many.

I do not remember when I first met Pantji. He seems, somehow, always to have been a part of that design which was woven into the fabric of our family life since the coming of Gandhi, but it was only in 1936 that I really came to know him and since that time each passing year has deepened my affection and admiration for him. I have seen him in good times and in bad ones. I have had the privilege of sharing his confidence when political troubles threatened to destroy us and also

when we tasted the fruits of triumph, but there has never been a word or sentiment from him which was not inspired by the highest motives and based on a moral standard, few in these days, care to follow. His loyalty to the cause of freedom needs no comment from me, his loyalty to certain basic values is not perhaps so widely known, yet it is this loyalty that keeps him at his desk until long after others have left the office and which makes it possible for him to find time to listen to all those who are in need. One may not always agree with his decisions, but there can be no argument about his honesty of purpose or his absolute fearlessness. He is heavily burdened, yet there is always time for a smile and a joke—always an encouraging word for those who are disheartened. How many times I have gone to his room angry and discouraged at the eternal delays and complications of official work, determined to disentangle myself from the endless yards of red tape and shake the dust of the Secretariate from my feet. Pantji looks at me. Knowing full well what I have come for he talks, instead, of the weather, some domestic incident, sometimes of himself, and soon I begin to realize that my official difficulties are insignificant compared to those which almost engulf him. Just as I am leaving, he refers to the matter for which I came. "Of course, I see your

point, but none of us can quit—I'm rather tired myself....." I go back to my office with its files and redtape and all the other paraphernalia which constitutes a minister's life with renewed courage and—within me—a deepening love and respect.

I offer these few words in homage to a beloved leader and a great man.

A BRAVE SOLDIER

(By Damodar Swarup Seth, M. L. A., (Central))

I am very glad to learn that Shri B. K. Tiwari of Almora is compiling a presentation volume bearing on the diverse aspects of the life of Shri Govind Ballabh Pant, Premier of the United Provinces. Though it is an embarrassing job to write a few lines in appreciation of the patriotic services of a friend and a colleague, I cannot easily resist the temptation of sharing with other friends the pleasure of offering him my felicitations on the happy occasion of his 60th birthday which falls in September 1947.

(The life of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant has been a veritable source of inspiration to all of us who had the good fortune of being closely associated with him. His clearness of thought and vision is well-known and appreciated even by those who sometimes differ from his socio-economic outlook on current problems.)

✓ (Like a brave and disciplined soldier, he has ever marched forward, never knowing how to retrace a step once taken. He gave ample proof of his courage and determination as a spirited non-violent fighter, undaunted by the *lathi* blows inflicted by the British Police

who discovered in him a rather convenient target on account of his height and body volume. The injury that he received at Lucknow on the occasion of the Simon Commission Boycott Movement resulted in a chronic abdominal pain which made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him to lead an active life for a long time. But inspite of this great handicap he returned to take his full share in the trials and tribulations that faced the nation. His response to national call was always spontaneous, inspite of his health being wrecked by repeated imprisonments.)

As a man, Pantji is shrewd, cheerful and polite. He possesses a remarkable capacity to face the bitterest criticisms. His sharp retorts to the attacks made either by political opponents or by his own comrades-in-arms do not bear the least sign of ill-will or malice. The sterling qualities of his head and heart have combined to make him a towering personality, particularly in the parliamentary phase of our national struggle.

(In earlier days, he steered the Swaraj Party through troubled waters as Leader of the Opposition of the U. P. Legislative Council under the Montford reforms, and even kicked off a Governor's offer for ministership since the Congress decided to boycott those outworn institutions. Later, he made the mark as the Deputy Leader of

the Congress Party in the Central Legislature, when his learned speeches and studied comments on budget proposals of the Government of India won applause even from hot-headed bureaucrats like Sir J. Grigg, the then Finance Member to the Government of India. He soon came to be recognised as the Congress expert on matters of Indian public finance.¹⁾ Pandit Pant is essentially a great parliamentarian and constitutionalist.

It does not, however, mean that his services are confined only to the parliamentary front. He has proved his worth outside this field also and cheerfully borne innumerable hardships which have been a regular feature of our constructive, organisational as well as agitational work outside the legislative chambers. During the most difficult period of economic depression when the peasant had to struggle for substantial relief, he U. P. Provincial Congress Committee appointed him as a sort of Liaison Officer to keep constantly in touch with the Provincial Government. The peasantry of the province found in him an ardent champion of their cause and one who was always ready to plunge in their day to day problems. The exhaustive, thorough and ably drafted report of the Agrarian Distress Enquiry Committee, appointed by the U. P. Congress Committee, bears clearly the imprint of his genius.

The Two Premiers



No body could have imagined at that time that the destinies of this province will be guided a few years later by him as the head of the Congress Government. Though some of the recommendations contained in that marvellous document have been incorporated with the new Tenancy Act, much still remains to be done. Certain limitations imposed by the Government of India Act, and the intense opposition by the feudal lords of the province prevented his government from completing the task thoroughly during the first Congress regime. The peasantry in its restlessness now once again eagerly looks forward to their own government to end that feudal economic system for ever.

Let me quote here a passage from the Agrarian Enquiry Committee report of 1931 :—

"The country is today faced with a difficult problem. Mere remissions in rent and revenue will not solve it.....We will have to devise and introduce a system which will insure to the tenant his subsistence. Unless this is done, the problem remains unsolved. Remissions or some similar devise might ease the situation for a year or two, or even for a decade, but the problem will remain there. The more the solution is delayed the more is the danger of the situation going out of hand. If those, in whose power it is today, do not

give necessary relief to the distressed cultivators, hunger and starvation will force to seek relief for themselves. And then who can tell what would happen ? Millions of *Khans*, and almost 35 millions they are, will not meekly submit to starvation. They are bound to seek relief they are bound to get it. We can today solve it peacefully. How it will solve itself tomorrow, no one can dare foretell".

It is now 15 years that these words were written with almost prophetic vision. The problems remains unsolved even today and must be attacked boldly and from all sides. The demand for the abolition of the Zamindari system has grown so strong today, that no power on earth can stop it from materializing at an early date. This relic of the medieval past has got to be done away with, and let us hope that speedy action will be taken under the able guidance of Pantji and Rafi Saheb to give full effect to the recommendations of the Agrarian Enquiry Committee Report, of which they were the authors and the signatories. No impediments put forward by the reactionary elements should be strong enough to check the advancement of millions of people. The hon'ble Premier may rely on full support of the Provincial Congress organisation, which shall be ever prepared with all its resources to extend its whole-

hearted co-operation in strengthening the hands of the popular ministers to push this important measure of much-needed reform, without which any programme of economic regeneration or social emancipation of the masses cannot proceed satisfactorily in this predominantly agricultural province. The stagnant pool of the Zamindari system must be removed from our body politic and any hindrances placed in our way by the vested interests should be faced and brushed aside. The overwhelming population of the province must be freed from exploitation by the lazy few. It is gratifying to know that the Government of Pandit Pant is contemplating to take up the matter seriously at an early date. The steam-roller must be set in motion immediately and ruthlessly so that future planning and development of the province may proceed on modern scientific lines.

The Government of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant is out today to fight the menace of acute food shortage which threatens to take a heavy toll of life. The underfed and ill-nourished population looks towards the Tri-colour as a veritable symbol of hope. The Premier fully realising his great responsibility in this vital matter, is devoting every ounce of energy to meet the unprecedented situation, made all the more difficult on account of past legacies and inherited traditions.

of the permanent civil service who by habit regard Congress as their opponent and sometimes deliberately try to sabotage their beneficial schemes. However, the confident tone in which Premier Pant has declared that he will not let a single person die of starvation has sent cheer and hope to the masses who have experienced in the past few years the worst rule of tyranny and oppression. Let it be hoped that these public servants will not be allowed to let loose their fury on the poor and downtrodden population under the pretext and excuse of Food Procurement Scheme.

The Congress decided to accept office on the basis of Quit India slogans as a temporary phase of our larger struggle for complete independence. There exists undoubtedly radical difference of opinion as to the wisdom, expediency or utility of adopting this course. The ultimate goal has therefore to be constantly kept in view, and the success or the failure of the parliamentary programme could only be assessed by the measure of progress towards that goal. One has a right to ask if the results so far achieved justify the original hopes.

The policy of the U. P. Government was enunciated by the premier in his first budget statement made on September, 6, 1937. "I hold that Government have no

business to exist if they cannot contribute towards the uplift and enrichment of the people whom they have been appointed to serveThe appalling poverty has to be removed from one hundred and five thousand villages in the province, darkness has to be replaced by light, dull and monotonous drudgery and despair by a little hope, relaxation and good cheer". He again observed in March 1939: "We are determined to change the state of affairs in the countryside and to make life richer, fuller and cleaner for villagers..... We have no doubt that in changed order..... his whole outlook in life will undergo an appreciable change, we expect to fulfil our ambition of creating a bold peasantry which will be our country's pride."

Nobody can ever doubt the sincerity behind these high aspirations of the hon'ble Premier who literally took all possible pains to translate his policies into action. It is however an entirely different matter, how much it was possible or is possible now to achieve under a constitution imposed upon the people by alien rulers with so many limitations. The future historian of our struggle for freedom will alone be able to tell how far the Congress Government during these few years succeeded in their bold intentions to infuse a little life and a little strength and a little self-respect in the

common man or made him conscious of the inherent dignity of a free citizen, inculcating in him habits of self-reliance and of resistance to oppression.'

The intelligence, integrity and devotion of Pantji has rightly won for him a seat on the national cabinet—the Congress Working Committee. This small executive committee of the great national organization is composed of our elder statesmen who have proved their worth to the nation as the best brains of the country. Only men possessing highest character and experience have a chance to reach that top ladder, though lately plenty of new blood has also been infused in that body by our new rashtrapati Pandit Nehru who, inspite of being over 56 still looks young in age and energy. The nation feels that the direction of the destinies of 400 million people is secure in their hands. The younger generation sometimes grows restive over the policies and methods propounded by the elder of the Working Committee. Yet their love and respect for the national leaders have always prompted them to loyally carry out orders at moments of national crisis.

May Pantji live long to guide the country into full nationhood.

PANT—"AS I SEE HIM"

(*By Sri Prukasu, M. L. A., (Central)*)

I met Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant—or Pantu as he is familiarly and affectionately known to all—for the first time early in 1924 when the Swaraj Party, otherwise known at the time as the Council Party of the Congress, contested the elections and was able to return a large number of members to the then newly-elected U. P. Legislative Council. Pandit Motilal Nehru was among the foremost leaders of the Party; and out of consideration for him and Deshbandhu Das, more than for any thing else, I believe, the Congress had permitted the contesting of elections to Congressmen, even though officially it held itself aloof, and even Mahatma Gandhi had reconciled himself to it. The Council session was just about to begin and Pandit Motilal himself had gone up to Lucknow to arrange the preliminaries and hold consultations with the members regarding the policy and programme of their legislative work.

I met Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant on the Kaisarbagh grounds as he and other members were walking about—the then meeting place of the Council being situated there—and was struck by the dignity of

his bearing and the tallness of his stature. He is among the tallest men among the top men of the Congress, perhaps coming next only to Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. This is remarkable because both the hill-people, among whom he is born, and the Maharastras from whom, I believe, he can trace a distant descent, are usually short of stature.

(Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant had been a keen politician in his own way since long before then, having taken part in political debates as a college student at Allahabad, measuring his strength against stalwarts like the late Mr. Chintamani, and also taken part in political conferences after college. I had heard Mr. Chintamani speak with high regard and affection of Pantji as far back as 1917. Pantji, however, seems to have been of a very retiring disposition and came out in public but rarely. He evidently devoted most of his time to his profession and local work at Naini Tal.

(So little were his capacities known in 1923 when he was elected to the Council, that Pandit Motilal Nehru was wondering as to whom to nominate as the leader of the party. I was present at the discussions at Lucknow at the time and no one thought of Pantji at all. Instead of a leader, Pandit Motilal suggested a small committee, consisting not only of the elected members

of the party but also of outsiders to help in legislative work; and appointed Mohanlal Saksena as a Whip. It was but natural and proper, however, that the people of the hills should have returned him to the Council, as he has always been held in high regard and esteem among them and is loved and revered by them in a manner which is the lot of few among the public men of the land.

It was some time after when Pantji made a great speech in the Council on some measure—I believe it affected the well-being of hill women—that everyone, members of Government and Opposition alike, instinctively came to regard him as the leader of the Swaraj Party, which he soon after formally became. Since then he has been in the force of public life and has risen by rapid steps to his present eminence. It would be gratuitous for me to estimate his public work and his attainments as a public man.

Like all others in Indian politics today, he has been in jail over and over again, and at the Ahmednagar Fort he has recently spent very nearly three solid years with his fellow-members of the Working Committee in close and irritating confinement. His health has never been good, and today it is very bad indeed. It is surprising how he is able to do so much work, travel-

ling all the time, despite his ailing body. Friends must have marked that there is a constant shake in his head; and unfortunately his increasing physical weakness has now brought on a bad shake in his hands as well. He used to do a fair amount of walking and riding before, but now, I fear, he can take but little exercise. I knew him as fond of good and even rich and heavy food, but when he last stayed with me, I sadly marked he had lost all his old taste, for now he takes food in very small quantities indeed. His love for good tea, however, continues unabated. His waist has always given him much trouble, being perhaps a life-long sufferer from lumbago. He has carried a big staff to lean on as he walks, almost all the time I have known him. It may be, he has carried it as a matter of habit acquired in hill climbing. He is devoted to Kruschen Salts; and if his host has a bottle of it in the house, he may almost be certain, Pantji will pack it with his goods before he goes, even if he leaves behind some clothes and toilet articles for his host to look after and send it back—only it—he cares. Pantji has always been absolutely indifferent to his clothes, and he is able to be happy in any type of clothing and any cut whatsoever. The lapels of his *dhoti* scarcely even come symmetrically down his legs and his coat,

The Premier Among Files



shirts and trousers are always a sight for gods to see ! Only Prime Ministers and Lord Chancellors, they say, can afford to be careless about their clothes ! and Pandit has been a Prime Minister : and so it is all right, I believe !!!

He used to be very orthodox in matters of food at one time. I remember Pandit Motilal Nehru once studying him, when he would not eat at Panditji's table, that a man of his culture should not be so narrow. He however, gave up his qualms after his first imprisonment, and does not now observe conventions of " touchism " in matters of food. He always seems to live in the midst of a crowd, and large numbers of persons of all sorts constantly surround him at home and wherever he might be. He is kindly and affectionate by nature, though not in the least sentimental. I remember when first I spoke to him against men dragging *rikshaws* and women having to carry loads, he dismissed all this talk as sentimental verbiage. (Everyone must have marked his delightful informality when he deals with friends ; and his house is always open to everyone and he regards it as his right to enter every friend's house without notice and squat unperturbed even if the friend is not there. When I complained that he did not give any notice of his arrival to enable me to make proper arrangements.

he said he did not mean to give any notice at all but meant to stay all right. On one occasion, many years ago, when he was making a fairly long stay at Benares, not being well, and I had to go away for a few days in between to keep some engagements, I apologised and asked him to stay on and not to regard that he was causing the household any inconvenience. He said that he would stay as long as he liked, did not care whether he gave any discomfort to anybody or not and would make himself perfectly at home whether I was in or out. He knows the servants of the house and remembers their names and is quite happy whenever he is here. With a friend and guest like that, the host has no worry. I found him here all right when I came back. His own most faithful servitor and attendant is the affectionate Madhava, so well known to all his friends.

The worry, however, that Panditji causes to all his friends and fellow-workers, to the public generally, is his absolute want of what is called method and his extreme unpunctuality. All this almost makes him "unreliable" and "undependable", in the strict social sense of the words. He thinks, nothing of keeping persons and even large public meetings, receptions, tea-parties etc., waiting for hours. And when he does turn up, his unconcerned demeanour shows as if he is

punctual to the second, and is really most disconcerting to all others. On one occasion, I had asked some friends to meet him at dinner—I have never tried to experiment again. He came long after the dinner was over, even when the guests had waited quite a long time for him. There was no look of surprise on his face. He simply did not mind missing a train and then catch it up somewhere taking long motor journeys—even from Haldwani to Cawnpore used to be almost favourite pastime with him! He may not attend to important communications, leaving a person wondering as to what to do. I fear, he shares with his countrymen these inherited "defects". I have always had a fear—I hope I am wrong—that a good bit of his work as Prime Minister may have been spoiled because it might not have been done in the way such things have got to be done; and I do know this, however, that he most unfortunately gave a bad impression of himself as a master and even as a man who came in contact with him for the first time, and that too officially.

People must have also marked a certain amount of impatience in his mental make-up; his apparent inability to see the other man's points of view; he sometimes almost appears brusque and rough as he dismisses those who do not happen to agree with him

and have happened to draw him into a controversy. But I know that all this is just the outward veneer of a really good and strong man who knows his mind ; who is confident of the rightness of his path and who means to get things done. Even those who for a moment feel upset, come soon to entertain high regard for him and understand him when they know him better and realise that they have perhaps inadvertently done him wrong. He is always ready to help a friend and he is very deeply devoted to children. His mind is always alert and receptive, and ultimately his judgments are sound and just.

✓ Pantji's one great virtue that greatly attracts me and that keeps me wondering is his poise ; his absolute freedom from all worry ; and the sense of comfort and repose he always seems to have—however trying the circumstances and however heavy the work may be. All who come in touch with him are bound to be impressed by this. I have seen him in the midst of his files as a minister ; I have seen him in the midst of an excited lot of people while a communal riot was on ; I have seen him in crowded meetings and in discussions in committees. He is always unperturbed giving the impression that the burden of life and the anxieties of the most responsible of offices where big decisions

have to be taken and where human lives may be at stake, sit lightly upon him. It is not that he does not feel; it is not that he is not anxious; but it is certain that he appears as if he were unconcerned and indifferent. Very often, I have felt that he is as near an approach as possible to the description of Krishna in the Bhagavat Gita of "how a man who is 'stable of mind' talks or sits or walks".

One remarkable incident is graven on my memory in all vividness though it occurred as far back as 1929. Mahatma Gandhi was at Almora and I had gone to Naini Tal for a wedding at Pantji's place. Mahatmaji wired to Pantji to go and meet him at Almora. Narendra Devji was also there and a car—perhaps the worst that was available—was chartered to take us. Between one thing or another—these last minute engagements and visitors are always annoying, as we all know—and above all, because of Pantji's incorrigible habit of dilatoriness, it was quite late in the afternoon, despite my urgings and goadings, before we started. The wretched car was able to get along somehow; but the sun was setting by the time we got to Rantkhet. I proposed that we might stop for the night there, for it would not be possible to proceed on the hills in the dark. This would be dangerous besides

being against the law and, if we got stranded, we would find no convenient halting place between Ranikhet and Almora. Pantji cared neither for the law nor for the danger and the driver was compelled to proceed with the car. The twilight set and a tyre burst. This was a little too much for me.

I know how dangerous it is for a tyre to burst while a car is in motion. The driver is not always the master of the car on such occasions. The hill roads are narrow and there are no balustrades either, all along the line. The slightest swerving might mean dropping hundreds of feet to certain death. Pantji would not listen. Luckily, it was moon-lit night and with the help of what light there was in the heavens, the car proceeded. There was no light in the car itself. Even the driver's protests were in vain. The 'step in' wheel was put on. Soon after, there was another burst. While I was all along fidgety, anxiously looking right and left all the time, Pantji himself lay back comfortably in his seat unconcerned. The tyre of the second wheel had to be stuffed with various types of grasses in order to help the car to proceed. At last, we got to a little place called *Kosi*, a sort of a junction for lorries coming from Ranikhet, Almora and Someshwar.

It was quite late at night and the driver, despite all

his reverence for Pantji, at last stubbornly refused to proceed further, though Pantji himself was anxious to push along and willing to do so at all hazards. We spent the night in a vacant little cottage, under construction, we found there and went on to Almora the next morning after the car had been put right to some extent with the help of passing lorry-men who started plying their trade with sunrise. While Narendra Devaji and myself spread our beds on the floor of the cottage, in order to sleep, it was refreshing to find that Pantji issued forth to find some person who could cook some food for us in the neighbourhood, where there were a few inhabited cottages. No such man was however found, and none of us were any the worse for want of this unnecessary meal—we had suited ourselves enough during the wedding festivities. It does require some nerve to go on a rotten car at night with burst tyres on the narrow hill-road against all law and common-sense, between Ranikhet and Almora. I may not have admired Pantji's wisdom; I certainly admire his capacity for total indifference to life and limb in fairly dangerous and delicate situations. I may only wish he made concessions for the weaknesses of others and realised that all his companions are not necessarily so brave and undaunted as himself. There the nervousness

of a man from the plains on the circuitous hill roads and on lonely hill sides, is but natural.

Pantji is a person of many talents and has an exceedingly good memory for facts, incidents, names and faces. His sense of repose ought not to deceive anyone, for he is quite capable of very hard work. He very often works in his bed wrapped in his blanket and keep very late hours at night to catch the arrears. He has however never been an early riser. He remembers what he reads and can use his knowledge to good purpose. His speeches in the Central Legislative Assembly, when he was a member there, always told and Government found it difficult to reply to his criticisms or answer his charges. He speaks and writes both in English and Hindi with remarkable fluency and lucidity and he has a fine literary style of his own. His writings and speeches do not hurt anyone, even when the matters discussed rouse political or communal passions. He pronounces both English and Hindi in a peculiar manner, but is always clear and cogent. In the coming political changes, he is bound to play a big part and I hope that when once more the ordering of the affairs of our provinces comes into his hands, as their chief executive head, the men and women inhabiting them, will be able to obtain a sense of genuine security and

that we shall have peace and plenty after the terrible times of wanton repression and unmerited privations we have had these many years.

VIA-MEDIA BETWEEN TWO OPPOSITES

(By Rafi Ahmad Kidwai)

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant is a personal friend of mine. Our association for the last 15 years has been too close to allow dispassionate review of his life. He was comparatively an unknown figure in the provincial politics till 1923 when he was elected to the U. P. Legislative Council as a member of the Swaraj Party. Barring those who had the privilege of being his fellow students or who had come in contact with him in his profession, few people outside his own district knew him. But in the very first session of the Council he won for himself a distinguished place in Indian politics. His oratory, his debating skill, his intellect and his resourcefulness made him an ideal leader of a parliamentary party. He inspired confidence in his colleagues in the party and enjoyed respect of his opponents.

I first met him in 1924. In 1926 we were together on the committee appointed by the U. P. Provincial Congress Committee to select candidates for the ensuing general elections of the Central and Provincial Legislatures. But I came in intimate contact with him only in 1930 when every now and then I went to him

The "Big Three"



Nehru, Kidwai and Pant on way to Congress Cabinet meeting.

[—Courtesy "Patrika"]

at Holdwani to seek his advice in the conduct of the Civil Disobedience Campaign of 1930. In 1931, we passed a few weeks together at the Anand Bhawan when we were working on the Congress Agrarian Committee. Since then, I have had the privilege of working in intimate association with him.)

On occasions—and there were many—we differed. It is impossible to argue him out. He would always win his points. I know, on occasions I tried to be bully. I would deliberately irritate him, but this too had no effect. He is always calm and unruffled.

But he is very accommodating. He always tries to accept the view-points of his colleagues and is very 'good at suggesting a *via media* between the two opposite views vigorously advocated.

(In 1934 he was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly. He was elected Deputy Leader of the party there. Before the end of the first session, he had begun exercising dominating influence over the Assembly. He was listened with interest and respect by Treasury Benches and was on very good terms with the Leader and members of the Muslim League Party.)

(In 1937, he returned to the Provincial Legislature. As was but natural, he was elected leader and when a settlement was reached with the Governor about

the exercise of his special power, he formed the first popular government in the United Provinces under the Government of India Act 1935. The Ministry remained in the office for about two and a half years. It had before it a very ambitious programme. Two and a half years were too short a span of time to carry out even a part of that programme. But his personal popularity carried the Ministry through and on account of the confidence he inspired everybody appreciated the cause of delay.)

(By the time the Ministry resigned, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant had secured a dominating position in the counsel of the Congress. He has a permanent place in the Working Committee and his advice is sought on all important issues.)

Once again, he is heading a popular government in the province. He has taken on himself the most difficult task before the government today. At the time the Ministry was formed, there was panic in the country about food. Starvation was staring us in its most naked form. The man-made famine of Bengal was before us. People were sceptic of the success of the Procurement Scheme. Even the most optimists of us were not sure that our agriculturists will surrender a major part of their produce to the government to

feed the cities at a price far below the prevailing rates in the market. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant on assuming this charge made the bold announcement that nobody will be allowed to die of starvation.

He has made the Procurement Scheme a success. The food situation in the province is much better today than it was at the time of the formation of the Congress Ministry. This improvement is due to a large extent, to his confidence in his ability to persuade the tenants to yield the requisite quantity of grain.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant as Premier enjoys the confidence of the Muslim minority to an extent few people could have thought possible three months before. The communal tension engendered by the election excitement has, to a large extent, subsided. Generally the Muslim League members of the legislature talk well of him and even the "Dawn", the Muslim League organ, has more than once commented on his fairness. I do not think a higher complement would be paid to any one during these days of communal strife and strain.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant will make success of any job he entertains.

THE FIRST AMONG EQUALS

(By Dr. Kailash Nath Katju)

It is always difficult to write about a colleague in public life, but when to that comradeship in public causes is added life-long friendship amounting to dear brotherly relations, the difficulty is increased a thousandfold. Judgment of the writer is suspect and merited, and even moderate praise runs the risk of being discounted as biased. Bearing this in mind, I have yielded with some reluctance to a request to contribute to this series of papers dedicated to my dear friend, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant.

(He and I are just about the same in age, both born in 1897.) We came to know each other in the Muir Central College as it was in 1906, and since then, though our field of professional activity lay in different parts of the province, we have been attracted to each other by so many ties and to many common sympathies and common opinions that it would be difficult to describe cumulatively all of them in adequate language.

I do not know why, but I am generally drawn strongly towards the people of the hills. It may have something

to do with my own ancestry. Kashmiri Pandits hail from the beautiful valley of Kashmir surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains and, though it may be that residence in the plains of India in close proximity to courts and kings and capital cities, and a strong attachment to courtly manners and other good things of life, have made the Kashmiri Pandits in India rather sophisticated individuals, but nevertheless I imagine the original strain subsists and often with little encouragement becomes prominent and assertive and vigorous in any given individual member of the community. It may be due to climatic conditions in the hills, but I always associate a hardness of life and simplicity of living and plain thinking and strict integrity of mind with the hillman. He lives always so close to nature in its rather stern aspects that he cannot but be honest both to himself and to others. Nature requires in its dealings with man strict straightforwardness. In straight dealing with nature, there is no room for cheating and chicanery, and one reaps as one sows. It is only when man comes in contact, with man that duplicity commences and insincerity comes into play. Hillmen live at great distances in small communities and their intercourse with each other is on a very restricted scale—hence the endearing traits to which I have referred. This is not

intended to be a self-praise. Though I am myself a Kashmiri Pandit, my ancestors left the mountains and their valleys nearly 200 years ago and I, therefore, cannot legitimately claim any one of these beautiful virtues even by heredity. If I possess any, it must be due to the original strain to which I have alluded above.

But Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant still lives in the hills. He was born and brought up there and I dare say that it is only the exigencies of an ever-growing public life that have brought him into contact with the plains. Otherwise he may well have spent the whole of his life in the blessed hills of Kumaun uncontaminated by the vices of people of the plains in full exercise of his original pristine virtues. (After taking his law degree he commenced practice in the Kumaun courts.) These courts also partake something of the characteristics of their native valleys and environments. I have had large experience of litigation in the hills. As a matter of fact, it was Pantji—to call Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant by the name by which he is now affectionately known all over the province,—who introduced me to Kumaun as a field for my legal craftsmanship. One is struck by the primitive surroundings of the people of the hills even in their legal proceedings and their legal fights in the law-

courts. They are essentially simple-minded people and if any one lies in Kumaun he lies with such utter gutlessness that it is not difficult to see readily through the prevarication. It is difficult to be angry with these people even when they are lying as litigants. You do not come across in the hills with well-laid conspiracies and well-martialled schemes for fabrication of evidence and daring perjuries and forgeries ; crimes are simple and a murder is a rare occurrence, and civil litigation* raises questions of the peculiar customs and usages prevalent in the hills. Luckily, owing to a variety of causes, not the least of which was the fact that the people of Kumaun fortunately escaped the blessings of administration of justice by a Chartered High Court, the local courts have preserved to the hillmen the entire body of their own customs and traditions.

Proceedings in the Kumaun courts are held before Executive Officers, Assistant Collectors, Deputy Commissioners and Commissioners, and these gentlemen are not fond of legal subtleties. It requires an exceptional kind of advocacy, frank and outspoken and plainly helpful to the administration of justice that can make its mark in these courts, and it is a tribute both to Pantji's intellect and also to his intense sympathy and fellow-feeling for the common man of the hills that he

soon made a great name for himself in the law courts. Be it also remembered that we have no big Zamindars and other class of moneyed people in Kumaun. It is a land of small proprietors, each clinging to his own patch of land and making his living by the sweat of his brow, a hard life, and an advocate of these people must in the very nature of things partake a good deal of the characteristics of these people.

I know something of the art of advocacy myself. People do not realize how difficult it is, sometimes the very skill of the artist lies in the apparent artlessness of his art, but in my opinion a rogue and a crafty man can never be a good advocate. A sterling simplicity of character and innate goodness of heart and above all inflexible integrity of mind are the greatest assets that an advocate can possess, and the less refined in legal procedure the courts, the greater the necessity for possession of these primary attributes for a successful advocate. The true advocate is he who does not merely win the cause for his client, but also wins for himself the esteem, the respect and the regard not only of judges but also of his brethren at the Bar and the litigants at large, including in the last category even the individuals whom he has defeated in the law courts. I suggest that Pantji's outstanding

success in his legal career, short though it was in duration, furnishes a good criterion of his great merit and is in itself a noteworthy tribute to the excellence of his character.

The United Provinces, however, and indeed the country as a whole, do not, I am inclined to think, now set much store by Pantji's legal record. I doubt whether many people are even aware of his signal distinction as an advocate. We now know him as a great public leader who has suffered greatly in the struggle for Indian independence and contributed largely to the success of that national endeavour and enterprise. As a parliamentarian of great gifts, he came over to public notice over twenty years ago when as a leader of the Swaraj Party in the United Provinces he led a great band of able and faithful men in the old United Provinces Legislative Council. There, as his colleague in parliamentary battles, he enjoyed the friendship and the co-operation of another parliamentarian to the manner born—I refer to C. Y. Chintamani. The politics of these two men differed widely. They thought almost on different planes. One was nothing but a constitutionalist and the other, I imagine, was anxious to study books merely for the purpose of knowing how revolutions can be successfully carried on, but it is again a tribute

to the great humanity of Pantji's character that he formed a lasting friendship with Chintamani. The merit of Pantji was the greater because Chintamani was a man of strong likes and dislikes, and charity towards his political opponents or to those who differed from him in public life was not Chintamani's strong point. To persuade such a man to like you and to win his regard was not a small thing and Pantji succeeded also in that venture.

After a spell of years, which included incarceration during the Salt Satyagraha Campaign, came another spell of parliamentary work in the Central Assembly, and there 'as Deputy Leader of the Congress Party [within 18 months Pantji acquired for himself the reputation of a great financial genius on the Opposition benches, a man who could cross swords on more than equal terms with the most astute Finance Member and other experts on the Government side. It was said of Lord Reading as an advocate that he almost lived and revelled in figures and thought in terms of double entry. Similarly, it is a marvel to his friends to see how dexterously and how nimbly Pantji's mind works in the mysteries of a budget. He is the envy and the admiration of his colleagues and his official secretaries when he is handling great masses of figures and marshals

them in well-arrayed forces.

The work in the Central Assembly proved Pantji not only as a great financial genius but also as a great orator. True it is that he requires a little time to warm up to his subject. His is not the flashing eye, and the scornful retort, the lively repartee and the witty epigram which sets the House in roars of laughter or crushes his opponent within the first five minutes of his speech. Pantji is a spacious orator. He wants a little field to spread himself, but as an expositor of a grand policy or a person who appeals in a sustained manner to the highest moral instincts of his listeners, I think Pantji is hard to beat.

(The work in the Central Legislature made him the inevitable undoubted Leader of the Congress Party which had to assume the responsibility of office in 1937. Up till then I had met him frequently and maintained close contact with him, but with the assumption of office my relations with him became indeed too intimate even for description.) The Congress Ministry of six members, of which Pantji was *primus inter pares*, the first among equals, worked together during 27 months of its office with a unity of purpose, a harmony of outlook and closeness of personal relations that was the admiration and envy of friends and foes alike.

One can easily be charged with exaggeration in statement, but in truth the Ministry functioned as a band of brothers (we had one dear sister also), and to this harmony and affection the greatest contributing cause was the gentleness, the charm and the essential simplicity of Pantji. My work till then had lain in different fields; but for the previous 18 months of activity as Chairman of the Allahabad Municipal Board, I know nothing of the art of public administration or the art of management of parliamentary assemblies. I am conscious that I possessed in a very large degree then (presumably I do so even now, though I have become a little mellowed by age and suffering) the defects born of my calling and I shall personally remain most grateful to Pantji for what I learnt of the mysteries of administration and what is more important, the great and difficult art of handling men and affairs from Pantji.

In Gladstone's phrase he is an old parliamentary hand, imperturbable, painstaking and of limitless patience. I have marvelled at this quality of his, but coupled with that is the great wealth of affection which he bestows lavishly upon his friends and colleagues and co-workers. I think the number of his friends all over the province is enormous and for each Pantji has real, genuine and abiding regard.

Of the part which Pantji has played in our highest councils in the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress it is not for me to speak. But it is noteworthy that of all the companions among whom Pandit Jawaharlal passed three years of his life in the Ahmednagar Fort he has singled out Pantji among two or three others as one whom he then learnt to love. This is not a small thing. Long incarceration for long periods in the small suffocating atmosphere of a jail barrack shows the real mettle of the man, the real stuff of which he is made, and if you can stand that test, then you can stand any test conceivable

PANT AND HIS WEAKNESSES

(By Sampurnanand.)

There are a number of people who can write about Pantji's qualities of head and heart—and these are numerous from their intimate personal knowledge of him. I have had opportunities of coming into close contact with him during the last twenty years. We first met on the occasion of the Provincial Political Conference at Azamgarh, but that was merely casual meeting. Real acquaintance, which has ripened into friendship, respect and affection on both sides, began when we both became members of the U. P. Legislative Council in 1927. It was his second term of membership but I was going to the Legislature for the first time. The Party elected him as Leader, with me as Secretary, and Sri Nemi Saran as Chief Whip. We were a small group of 23 men, always vigilant and alert, because we were the real opposition to the Government. The Liberals under Chintamani also sat on the opposition benches and there was a loose alliance between them and ourselves. There were some good speakers and men of considerable public experience among them but the Treasury Benches never took them very seriously. They treated them as office-hunters who would like to step

into office, if they could manage to defeat the ministers in-charge of the transferred departments on some vital issue. Every passage-at-arms between Mr Chintamani and the leading lights of the government was animated by a spirit of bitterness, bordering almost on personal animosity. The Congress Party, on the contrary, was known, from its principles, to be precluded from accepting office. Therefore, the debate, so far as we took part in it, was always conducted on a high impersonal, tend. There was very little social contact between most of us and the members opposite. This may or may not have been very desirable, but, at any rate, it removed all chance of any one accusing our members of seeking personal favours from members of the government. In spite of this absence of social contact, the relations between us were very cordial. The credit for this must, in no small measure, go to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. His suave manners and genial temperament together with his keen intellect and strength of character won for him the respect of friend and foe alike. One could easily see this in the behaviour of those across the floor whose unfortunate duty it was to oppose everything he suggested, even though it might appeal to their individual reasons as eminently reasonable. As for our party, it was not so much a political group as

a society of intimate, personal friends. Some of us, Pantji, Nemi Saran, the late Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi and myself, found ourselves so close together that we were laughingly referred to as the Treasury Bench among party members. The fact that we happened to be office-bearers and members of the Executive lent point to this joke

Age has been cruel to him in many ways but it has not robbed him of those qualities which made him a respected leader and a respected opponent. His record in the Central Assembly and the U. P. Legislature amply bears this out. Members of the Cabinet were not merely colleagues in office but a band of friends. There were no high brows among us, no one who walked on stilts. Pantji was certainly the Premier—there was no question of his not being the right choice—but he was also just one of us. We frequently met at his place, sometimes at the house of one or the other among the ministers, at times in the Dilkusha Park, after the day's heavy work and the discussion of momentous issues would be punctuated by laughter, to which Pantji contributed as heartily as anyone else. The work of the ministry was heavy and Pantji had taken charge of a number of very important departments. This was a mistake. He was compelled to bury himself in heavy

files which gave him little time to establish and maintain that personal contact which must exist between the leader of a party and its members. At times, this gave rise to petty misunderstandings and frayed tempers. Some people complained that Pantji had become 'inaccessible'. The complaint, as I have said, was to some extent justified, but this does not mean that members could not meet the Premier outside the Council Chamber. Of course, they often met him and, when they did they found in him the same genial Pantji as of old. There is no doubt that many a difficulty was smoothed away and many a situation, which threatened to become ugly, was saved by his cheerful words and good-humoured smile.

The members of the Opposition also felt the influence of his personal charm. They knew that he could take and give a vigorous punch but he was always a gentleman, always ready and willing to oblige, never in a bad temper. Such behaviour is infectious and it was seldom possible, much as, I am sure, some gentlemen opposite would have loved to do so, to import bitterness into our discussions.

I do not know if it is considered polite to refer to a man's weaknesses. No one is all intellect and sweet temper. Cerebration without committing mistakes may

generate awe but it is not possible to love a person whose behaviour will not permit us occasionally to laugh at him. You can wonder at a perfect machine, you can even worship it, but you cannot love it. You love the gods, because you can see them tripping at times. You can yourselves trip them up occasionally.

Pantjt has his weaknesses like all of us. One of these is his unconventionality, in dress, for instance, and table manners. I remember a public meeting which he was addressing in Benares some time before the arrival of the Simon Commission in India. One end of his *dhوتي* was gradually trailing down to the ground, the other was on the point of rising above the knee, like a short skirt. He himself appeared to be oblivious of this. Dr. Bhagwan Das who was sitting close to him whispered to me: "Some body should teach him to put on a *dhوتي* properly". He is more careful now, I find, but he still gives an occasional headache to some people who cannot reconcile themselves to any departure from a meticulous observance of conventional manners, particularly if these have the sanction of the West behind them.

He is not so rigid now, as he was a few years ago, in the observance of the outward rules of religion but he is still orth-dox. This is a weakness in the eyes of

some for whom all religion is superstition. Again, he finds it difficult to ignore the old rules about touching and serving cooked food and has, at times, to come home a hungry man, from a mixed table where these rules are apparently not known. It should not be difficult to effect a compromise between European table manners and Indian custom. Be this as it may, I have several times found myself a fellow-sufferer with Pantji, because I share his prejudices, if this is the right word. We have looked at each other in sympathy across the table, and given vent to our feelings on the way home. Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai has sometimes been a witness, sympathetic, I hope, to our misfortunes.

✓ His greatest weakness in unpunctuality. He has probably a vague idea that a day consists of twenty-four hours and an hour of sixty minutes but he does not seem to have a clear notion of what exactly a minute is. He seems to have worked out a theory about the elasticity of time, on the lines of Einstein theory of relativity. In this matter, he is in the company of some other great leaders to whom this province has given birth, I mean Malaviyaji and Tandonji. But he is the despair of friends like Sri Sri Prakasa. He may be two hours late for an interview; he may keep people waiting for a couple of hours at a dinner party, but he will not

permit the moving hands of the clock to disturb the even pace of his movements. He is genuinely sorry for the inconvenience caused to others but habit is too strong for him. He seems to regard strict regard for punctuality as a proof of the mechanization of the mind and blandly waives aside those who would protest with him.

The railway train is a great teacher of punctuality, but it has failed to impress Pantji. Fortunately for him, Indian trains seldom run to time and he very often manages to catch his train, in spite of his unpunctuality. This has made him sceptical. But even if he misses a train, he does not lose his temper. It is always possible to travel on some other conveyance. I remember a dinner party given by the gentry of Cawnpore to members of the Opposition in the U. P. Legislative Council on the occasion of our having defeated the demand for co-operation with the Simon Commission. Pantji started from Naini Tal, late as usual. The train had left Kathgodam by the time he arrived. He pursued it on his car in the hope that he would catch up with it somewhere between Kathgodam and Bareilly. The hope was not realized and he learnt at Bareilly that the train for Lucknow had departed. This did not daunt him and he motored all the way down to Cawn-

Father And Son



Young Govind (8 years) with his father
Pt Manorath Pant.

pore. This was a heavy price to pay for a dinner and any other person would have given up the attempt at Bareilly, contenting himself with a telegram expressing his genuine regret at the inability to attend the function.

I shall not attempt to write more. It is not easy to write impersonally about a trusted colleague and old friend. I can only say that in Pantji we have a person to work with whom is a pleasure and to know whom is privilege.

A POPULAR HERO

(By K. Kuma Rao)

(Like Scotland, the hills of Kumaon breed too many and feed too few. Like Scotsmen, Kumaonis are a hardy, enterprising race, and cast out their shoe all over Northern India. Their land provides a paradise for anthropologists, its races varying from savagery to civilisation. Soldering is their main profession, next to agriculture. When they are not serving in the British army, they are serving in the political army of India, and it was no wonder that Subhas Bose's I. N. A. contained three thousand of them, who gallantly fought for a forlorn cause,

Poetry and politics come naturally to the hillmen. They speak one of the chastest dialects of Hindi and chant the Vedas with classical precision. Sumitranandan Pant writes verse of the highest lyrical excellence. Govind Ballabh Pant (not the subject of this sketch) is a dramatic poet of note. In politics, Kumaon has an inspiring—record.) It has produced Premier Pant for the Congress and P. C. Joshi for the Communists, who is shoping into the Stalin of future India. Who does not remember the Baqeshwar bonfire

of 1920 ? Twenty thousand Congressmen, newly baptised with the Gandhian spirit, gathered on the banks of the lake and took an oath solemnly and sonorously to put an end to forced labour and compulsory levy of foodstuffs. To the first call of Gandhi in 1920 they rallied splendidly and ever since they have been in the Congress fold. One of their captains was to rise high later in public life.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, who has become Prime Minister of the United Provinces for a second time, carries the heights of the Himalayas into our politics. For mere stature alone, he is a giant among men, a figure from ancient history. Morally and mentally he is no less sublime. There is a transcendent nobility about his character which dwarfs others easily. He is more impressive by silence than by speech. His reserves are infinite. He can be taciturn like a statue while drawing others out all the time. He can be like Patience like a monument and takes decisions only when he must. Others skirmish, but he dives deep and rips open the core of the problem before him. Careful, cool and collected, the crisis never finds him unprepared. He is a great harmoniser and peace-maker, and can drive a motley host of different paces and tempers with the ease of a master.)

It is the supreme achievement of the Gandhian era that it has broken the fortress of privilege and given equal chance to the common man. The world belongs to the worker, and Pant is pre-eminently a self-made hero. Penniless brilliance and daring ambition, sustained effort and a great readiness to accept the challenge of the hour have carried him to the summit of power and fame. Early in life he modelled himself of Gokhale and retains that scholar-politician tradition in our politics. None can excel him as a conscientious and consummate student of public affairs. I listed in numbers, for the numbers came, says the poet. Public speaking came naturally to young Pant, whether the debating club of Almora or the Union of The Mutr Central College, Allahabad. Academic distinctions fell upon him thick and fast. Setting up legal practice in his home town, he met with indifferent success but only to avenge it later. Like all successful lawyers, he took politics as part of the day's labour. After an early apprenticeship to local self-government and a Hampden-like fray or two in local politics, he rose to legislative distinction.

When in 1923 Motilal Nehru built the Swaraj Party in the U. P. Legislative Council, he found none good enough for the leadership and appointed the safety-

device of a board to guide the party. It did not take him long, however, to discover a leader. A few speeches from the young lawyer from Kumaon, and he had no hesitation to put the crown on his head.)

(Sir John Simon's Commission of 1927 left a trail of blood wherever it went. Among the Congress organizers of a mammoth demonstration in Lucknow against the supercilious exhibition of white supremacy was Pandit Pant and he got his due reward. In the words of his friend and fellow sufferer, Jawahar Lal Nehru, he offered the biggest target for the police violence, which has since left a permanent mark on his body. After the civil disobedience ordeal of 1930, the Congress was once again attracted to the legislative forum, and Pant walked to the Central Assembly and became its deputy leader.)

(The varied gifts of speech and fruits of study he took to his work made him immediately an all-India figure of note. No party was more indebted to its leader for his special knowledge of finance than the Congress Party in the Central Assembly in 1934 to Pant. Grigg was contrary and cantankerous but learned and scholarly. In Pant he met a foeman worthy of his steel. The Congress was singularly fortunate in the three top men that led it. Satyamurthi was the foundation, Pant

the structure, Bhulabhai the dome. Between them they took parliamentary workmanship to the highest level. They supplied each other's defects and reinforced each other's qualities. If Bhulabhai was rather thin in the subject matter of his speeches, he was electric in the spacious movement of political principles. Pant supplied the ballast and the scholarship, and eloquence no less ample, if somewhat less dazzling. Satyamurthi was a parliamentarian to the manner born. Intellectually *less equipped, he was nevertheless the salt and strength* of the party. He was his policeman on the watch-tower, the start shooter during question-hour, the sledge-hammer during debate.

Back to the provincial assembly Pant became Premier by the unanimous franchises of his party. Fresh laurels were awaiting him. He was its star speaker and chief administrator. It was a notable assembly of men with some rare intellectuals, seasoned in a long and hazardous public life. An overwhelming majority is often a liability than an asset. The temptation to use the strength of a giant like a giant has too often to be resisted. It will continue to be a debatable point whether the Congress Party in this province used all the strength it had to put through important reformative legislation. The machine perhaps moved too slow, the

leadership was somewhat pedestrian. But the Congress was not out to build a new heaven and a new earth on the banks of the Ganges. It miscalculated heavily. It thought it had an eternity to work in, but the war came and threw down the jerry-built structure of party and ministry.

Seven years after, it is again back in office, and history must not repeat itself. There is no tomorrow for a revolutionary party. The best reforms must be done at the swiftest pace and in the amplest measure. The electoral promises must be redeemed, the *Kisans* must come into their own, the *Zemindars* must go. It would not be enough merely to liquidate the evil heritage of the Hallet regime or to prevent a few millions from falling a prey to famine. The Congress is not in office again only to show its capacity to rule. It must rule well and rule to build a new social economy. If the United Provinces are at the leadership of Indian political movement, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant is most assuredly the doyen among the Congress premiers. He has achieved much. He should achieve more.

The U. P. Premier.

(By P. D. Tandon, Journalist)

Pant is one of our ablest leaders and as a parliamentarian there are not many in India who can be compared with him. It is difficult to imagine any legislature in the U. P. without Pant. It will be like the play of Hamlet without the prince of Denmark. Ordinarily, those who are very much engrossed in constitutional technicalities lose revolutionary fervour, and develop a dislike for any kind of struggle. But it is not the case with Pant. I do not know any instance when Pant did not willingly participate in any movement or opposed it. He knows the value of constitutionalism, but is fully aware of the fact that a stage comes when it becomes obsolete and revolutionary programme is the only choice. It is a delight to see Pant unravelling the intricate knots of constitutional intricacies, overwhelming the opponent with cogent arguments and brilliant eloquence. He hardly uses harsh words to convince the rival, makes no attempts to ridicule him, but weighs him down by the sheer force of logic and reason.

(After his release from Bareilly prison in 1945, he read in newspapers about the hardships to which his

dear and valued friends Pandit Nehru and Acharya Narendra Deva were put. This callous attitude of the Hallett Government towards India's leaders hurt him much and in the course of a powerful statement he indicted the Government for its deeds. It was the voice of righteous indignation against injustice done to his colleagues and the humiliation heaped upon them by an irresponsible government. When once Pant is roused, he delivers great speeches and writes in most eloquent language.)

It was on June 3, 1942 that I went to Pant's residence with a member of the Congress Working Committee. We had just got down from the car and were on our way to our house that we were told that Pant was ill. Before going to our place, we dropped at Pant's and were taken to his room. It was, perhaps, for the first time that I saw him from close quarters. A tall, hefty, and impressive figure with broad eloquent eyes lay on a huge charpai reading a book. The moment he saw us, he got up on his bed and began enquiring all about us and our journey and hardly gave us time to ask as to how he was. Immediately, we enjoyed Pant's proverbial hospitality and we were entertained to lavish tea. I had heard from many people that practically the whole day Pant is "assailed"

by visitors and most of the time they are entertained and personally attended to by him. He takes scrupulous care to see to it that his guests and visitors do not feel neglected at his hands. In June 1942, when Nehru was released from the Almora jail, a number of people from plains went up to Naint Tal to receive him and most of them straightaway went to Pant and stayed with him, as if they had some hereditary right over Pant and his property. He was not keeping good health, but from my own experience I can say that from his sick-bed, he looked to the comforts and convenience of everyone. Several times during the day, he made personal enquiries about his guests who had gathered there and had converted his house into a railway waiting room.

Pant's greatest point is that he knows how to handle men. He tackles them psychologically and shows great patience in dealing with them. If you are angry and go to Pant to tell him hard things. I am sure most of your anger will fade away when you meet him. He gives you a fair chance to speak and hears you patiently. But you can never change or impress him, unless you convince him. He seems to be hearing all that you say, yet he does not hear most of what you say. People have a habit of babbling irrelevantly, but Pant

has no time for it. You can go on speaking, but he hears only that, which is relevant, and to the rest of it, he pays no attention. The story goes that once an angry Congressman went to him to narrate his grievances against him. The unkind man spoke continuously for about an hour in an angry tone, but ultimately got tired of speaking and kept quiet. Pant politely said, "Have you anything else to say?" Pant's patience, politeness and tolerance greatly impressed the accuser. He had gone to accuse, but remained to admire and since then he is reported to be Pant's great admirer. Many persons have fallen prey to this supreme technique of Pant.

Pant belongs to a very respectable family of Pahari Brahmins. Since his very boyhood, he was known to be a painstaking individual. In 1905, he joined the Muir Central College and had brilliant academic career. Pant burnt midnight oil during college days, when his many other class-fellows gossiped and wasted time in useless pursuits. Pant was a leader of his fellow-students and always inspired those who worked with him. His fearlessness, courage and honesty impressed his comrades very much and they used to say that Pant was destined to be a great man and he has justified their expectations. Pant had a flourishing practice at

Naini Tal, but gradually the politician in Pant got the better of the lawyer and he said good-bye to the profession of law. (He had created an excellent impression on his co-workers by the honesty of purpose, and sincere devotion to his political duties and he was elected to the A. I. C. C. in 1916 and since then he had been its member. Pant showed great ability as a parliamentarian, and in 1937, he was elected the leader of the Congress Party in the U. P. Legislature and then he formed the ministry and worked as the Premier. Hard and exacting task of premiership shattered his health and when he was arrested in 1942 he was already a broken man and the isolation of Ahmednagar Fort did him further damage. Once again the people of his province have elected him as their premier and strain of heavy work has already started telling on his health.) It is now upto his friends, admirers, and colleagues to see that Pant is not over-burdened with worries.

A SKILLED DEBATER

(By Iqbal Narain Gurtu)

My acquaintance with Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant began some 25 years ago when as a young lawyer he had already begun to establish his position at the Bar. I well remember how he used to come to the Indian Club at Naini Tal which in those days was a favourite meeting place for people interested in social, political and cultural topics. My old friend, Mr. Chintamani (later Sir C. Y. Chinramani) who was the first Education Minister in these provinces in the new Legislative Council constituted under the Montford Reforms often used to be the chief centre of attraction for all those who were present. He was a charming conversationalist and we all used to enjoy and derive benefit from his entertaining talks which were full of humour and interesting anecdotes and of shrewd observations on contemporary man and current affairs. He was gifted with exceptionally strong memory which was often the wonder and astonishment of every body. Mr. Pant from his early youth displayed a keen interest in politics. He was already taking a prominent part in all affairs which closely touched the life of people in Kumaon, and devoted much of his time to public service

Mr. Chintamani's interest in Mr. Pant naturally grew strong and gradually developed into a deep affection for him. As a shrewd judge of men, he fully recognised the potential forces that were silently moulding the life and character of young Pant and were all the time struggling for a fuller expression. Soon the mysterious urge of the spirit within led Mr. Pant to throw himself into the political struggle which received its great vitality and vigour under the leadership of Gandhiji with his distinctive technique and method of action. But though Chintamani and Pant parted company in politics, their mutual regard and respect for each other remained unaffected.

Mr. Pant was not a member of the Legislature in which Mr. Chintamani was the Minister. But when the term of the first Legislature expired and fresh elections took place, Mr. Pant was returned to the Council as a member of the Swaraj Party which was started under the leadership of such talented sons of India as the late Motilal Nehru and Chittaranjan Das. The present writer who represented the University Constituency in the first Council but not in the second had not thus had the privilege of coming into contact with Mr. Pant who was selected as the leader of the Swaraj Party in the Council, but from all accounts, it is clear that Mr. Pant

scon established his reputation as a skilled debater and tactful leader. Nature has gifted him with fluency of speech and an intellectual grasp which are so essential for success in parliamentary work. To these natural advantages he added the great qualities of hard work, sincerity of motive and integrity of character. When the Annual Budget used to be discussed in the Council his speeches as well as those from Mr. Chintamani were listened to with great respect and attention and were considered to be the best contributions on the subject. His criticisms were always well-informed and bore ample proof of his industry and grasp of facts as well as principles.

In the third term of the Council I had many opportunities of closely watching the splendid work done by Mr. Pant as the leader of the Swaraj Party. Fortunately the late Mr. Chintamani was also a member of the Opposition then and was the leader of the Nationalist Party to which I had the honour to belong. The close association and cooperation of the two parties under the able leadership of two stalwart champions of freedom gave a fresh accession of strength to the Opposition, and on almost all occasions the Nationalists and the Swarajists worked hand in hand and brought to bear the same outlook on public questions that came up for

consideration and discussion. Perhaps the only occasion when the two parties could not agree was when the Swarajists decided to withdraw themselves from the Council for some time. When the exigencies of the situation afterwards led the Swarajist Party to decide upon re-entry into the Council, Sir John Lambert, who was well-known for his wit which was unfortunately often mixed with banter, extended his welcome to the Swarajists as the great "peripatetic brotherhood."

My recollections of the third Council are full of exciting and interesting incidents. I can recall to my mind several ministers at the time who used to cut such a sorry figure and presented a ready target for the Opposition. With the honourable exception of one or two who were trying to do their best in the restricted and limited conditions in which they had to work, the rest of them could only be regarded as mere show boys of the Government. Some were undoubtedly known for their unfailing courtesy and generous hospitality but proved to be merely amiable futilities in things that mattered. Others tried to bring into service a pompous pose to cover up their ignorance, while some who were conscious of their inner poverty of mind and intellect, clung to the coat-tails of their secretaries and observed a discreet silence. Whenever some adroit member of

the Opposition would drive any such Minister to speak, it was indeed a sight for gods and men. Once Mr. Chintamani made the whole House go into roars of laughter when with an agreeable surprise he exclaimed about a particular Minister "*It speaks, It speaks.*" The Council was so constituted before the enactment of the Act of 1935 that the combined efforts of the Nationalist and Swarajist Parties could hardly succeed in getting a decided verdict in their favour on important matters and on critical occasions. The Government Whip who was aptly described by one honourable Member as the "Inspirer General of the generally uninspired" could easily manage to get a majority of votes in support of the Government. There were, however, two occasions when the Opposition was able to secure just a bare majority and defeated the Government. One was when the infamous Indian Statutory Commission, popularly known as the Simon Commission, was appointed about the close of the year 1927. The whole country was roused to great indignation by the entire exclusion of Indians from the Commission which was sent to India by the British Parliament to enquire into the working of the system of government, the growth of education and the development of representative institutions in the country and to report on any

further changes desirable in the Indian Constitution on the principle of "responsible government". The present Prime Minister, Mr. Atlee, was one of the members of the Commission. "Simon, go back" was the cry raised at every place which the Commission visited early in 1928 and again when for the second time it came and worked for nearly six months in 1928-29. In order to appease the sorely hurt feelings of India the Commission put forward the plan of a "Joint Free Conference" consisting of the seven British commissioners and a committee consisting of a few representatives chosen by the Indian legislatures. This joint conference was to be provided with an opportunity of scrutinising such memoranda and testimony as may be placed before it. The provincial legislatures were also to be asked to constitute similar bodies to deal with matters touching each province. When the proposal of the formation of such Provincial Committee was placed before the U. P. Council, both the Parties gathered their full strength to oppose it. There was brisk canvassing on the part of the Government as well as the Opposition. The atmosphere was tense and the position full of uncertainty. At the last moment when members were about to go to the lobbies for recording their votes, two non-official members

belonging to other groups who had somehow managed to keep themselves in hiding to escape the pressure of the Government Whip suddenly entered the floor of the House and went into the lobby with the Opposition. Through some misunderstanding the President at first announced the result of the voting to be in favour of the Government to the great relief of the Government benches, but the President immediately corrected himself and announced the loss of the Government proposal to the great discomfiture of the official element. There were tumultuous scenes of excitement and thunderous applause on the first great victory of the Opposition. This curiously resulted in the forced resignation of two Ministers who, with a keen sense of constitutional propriety, had accepted the verdict of the Council and were not prepared to submit any memorandum to the Commission regarding the departments in their charge. The vacancies were filled up by the appointment of other ministers one of whom had, on the first occasion, sided with the Opposition. Such breach of faith and constitutional impropriety on the part of the newly appointed minister was deeply resented by the Nationalist and Swarajist parties and led to the second major victory of the Opposition. A vote of no-confidence was moved

against the Minister and in spite of the most vigorous canvassing on the part of the government whips, the vote of no-confidence was passed and the Minister concerned had to resign. On both these occasions Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant rose to the full heights of his stature and put up a severe indictment of the policy of the Government. Several years later, he served for a short period as a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly and there also with added experience and maturer judgment he showed, as Deputy Leader of the Congress Party, the same qualities of head and heart which had gained a high reputation for him in the Provincial Council.

Pandit Pant's career as a public man during the last twenty years and more may conveniently be divided into several parts:—(1) his work as a non-official member of the Legislature ; (2) his valuable services to the country as an organiser of public opinion and leader of a powerful movement for freedom ; (3) the intervening periods of incarceration in jail when he was deprived of all opportunities of active public service ; and (4) his work as a responsible head of Government.

I have already dwelt on his parliamentary work as a member of the Opposition. Of his many remarkable services as a recognised leader of a great national

movement and of the continuous sufferings, both mental and physical, which he has cheerfully and patiently borne in life, I need not say much as they are so well-known. In fact his devoted and selfless work and his life dedicated to the noble cause of freedom are his chief title to glory. On this happy occasion of his sixtieth birthday there will be many others much more competent than myself who will pay tribute to his brilliant record in this particular sphere where he has amply shown his great qualities of courage and determined will, of unshaken faith and willing sacrifice which loves to 'scorn delights and live laborious days' for the sake of a cherished ideal.

The work of a truly great leader who has to inspire and vitalise great public movements where people's minds have to be awakened and their hearts moved to action, where the followers have to be constantly spurred into activity and at the same time properly organised, drilled and restrained, is a stupendous task for which very few are really fitted, although many aspire to occupy that much coveted position. It is in fact given to very few to occupy a permanent niche in the temple of fame although many may for the moment receive temporary applause and attain a short-lived popularity. The arduous work of a leader who has to

play the role of a 'revolutionary' or an 'agitator'—using the words in their better and higher sense—is in many ways so dissimilar to the work of those who have to engage themselves into day to day administration which requires cultivation of a realistic sense not altogether bereft of the motive force and inspiration of a high ideal. The administrator is more or less overwhelmed with the responsibility of adjusting complicated interests often at variance with each other and has to carry the ship of the State through shoals and deep waters and has skilfully to direct its movement towards the desired goal of which he as the captain must have a clear comprehension. While the leader of a great movement is more concerned with the propagation of an ideal and with clearing the inner springs of action in human beings, the administrator is more concerned with embodying those ideals into a practical shape in a society full of conflicting human interests. Lasting and steady progress in a given society is the result of these two separate yet complementary forces. It is indeed given to still lesser few to combine in themselves the distinctive character of these two definite types of personality. Pandit Pant has fortunately been blessed with a happy blend of a successful leader and administrator.

In July 1937 Pandit Pant was called upon to form the Ministry in these provinces and continued to be the Premier for over two years till the Congress Ministers in the different provinces were asked by the Congress High Command to resign. A period of two years is indeed much too short for any political party to tackle important social and economic problems but the comfortable majority which his party had gained in the House enabled the Ministry to enact certain beneficial agrarian legislation. The Hindu-Muhammadan riots, the Shia-Sunni conflicts, the Khaksar episode, did create awkward situations for the Ministry which was compelled against its own best judgment to resort to methods which as a Party it had always condemned in the case of the previous Governments and from the effects of which the Party had undoubtedly suffered for a long time. With all these unfortunate happenings it cannot be denied by any fair-minded critic that the Ministry tried to tackle the main problems with enthusiasm, courage and sympathy, and kept the welfare of the masses and their advancement prominently in view.)

(At the last election the Congress Party has practically swept the polls and the responsibility of running the government of the Province has again been placed

on the broad shoulders of Pandit Pant. The political and economic problems in the year 1946 have become much more acute and critical than what they were seven years ago. In India the communal problem forms a very ugly and important feature of the political problem and places a growingly heavy strain on administration. The overwhelming majority with which the Congress Party has been returned will undoubtedly be a source of great strength to the present administration, but its very strength in numbers may at times bring about an unhealthy pressure which may be difficult to resist and lead to hasty decisions which may create new problems. That is where a well-informed, capable and efficient opposition in a democratic and parliamentary system can prove an effective check. But unfortunately an opposition constituted on communal lines with its narrow and warped mental and emotional outlook is more likely to hasten and create unhealthy tendencies and even dangerous situations. It is, however, a matter of great satisfaction that the Ministry consists of tried and experienced men with a person of the calibre of Pandit Pant at its head. All true friends of the country will wish him and his colleagues god speed.

(Pandit Pant's life has been a noble example to others

of sturdy patriotism. sincerity of purpose, dauntless courage and noble self-dedication to the cause of his country. His life history fully bears out the truth of the saying that the highest reward of service is more opportunities of greater service. Like a truly gifted man he has in his life risen 'from high to higher' and stands before us today

.....On fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire.)

A VIGILANT GUARDIAN

(By Dr. Sita Ram)

Although I had heard casually from several friends of mine about the academic career of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant at the Allahabad University, it was only in 1921 that I met him for the first time at Naini Tal where some meetings of committees of the then U. P. Legislative Council had taken me. He made a deep impression on my mind during the very first conversation. He impressed me as a coming man in the province. I felt then that it was a great pity that he was not favoured by the Naini Tal electorate in 1920 when he had stood for election to the U. P. Legislative Council under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. This electorate, however, has had the proud privilege of returning him after that and of thus making amends for past mistake by recognising his worth and giving him opportunities of showing his talents.

Our acquaintance ripened into friendship during the time I was in Naini Tal as a non-official member. From 1921 to 1924 we used to meet and discuss affairs pretty often. Subsequently, he shone as a clever lawyer and was in great demand. Even Government had at times to engage his services in some complicated cases.

It is a matter of history that the Congress policy of boycott of legislatures advocated in 1920 changed in 1923 with the emergence of a parliamentary party within the Congress called the Swaraj Party under the dynamic leadership of Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, Mr. C. R. Das and Sjt. Vithalbhai Patel. They were dubbed pro-changers as against the no-changers in the Congress camp.

{ Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant made his debut in the U. P. Legislative Council in 1924 as a member of this Swaraj Party and thus became my colleague. Being large in number, they occupied the Opposition benches and I had to occupy the cross benches as I had a no-party label. The party had no regular leader for some time. But by sheer dint of his ability, amiability and hard work, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant eventually rose to the leadership of the Swaraj Party and made quite a name for himself as a clever debater and a vigilant guardian of the interests of the people.} His presentation of facts and 'marshalling of figures, his persuasiveness and method of speaking, coupled with a peculiar incisiveness and directness in speech, when necessary, made him quite a towering personality—a towering personality as he actually is in his figure in the Council,

We remained colleagues only for one year, for I was too sick to attend to Council work till August, 1925. I used to admire the manner in which he had succeeded in making the Swaraj Party a well-knit and solid party in Opposition and in earning the respect or fear of various sections of the House. The manner in which he used his position in 1926 to secure concessions for the tenantry under the Agra Tenancy Bill, then on the anvil, confirmed him in his leadership of the Swaraj Party.

When I was elected to the Chair in August, 1925, I watched his activities from that place, more or less as an observer. In 1927 Mr C. Y. Chintamani entered the Legislature and was the leader of a party called the Nationalist Party. With Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant leading the Swaraj Party and Mr. C. Y. Chintamani leading the Nationalist Party, the Opposition and Government forces were well-nigh equal in number. These two gentlemen always gave a thought to the Government and debates and divisions on matters of moment were always excited and interesting, for example, the well-known debate on the Simon Commission resolution at Lucknow in 1928 and the debate on the no-confidence motion against one of the ministers at Naini Tal the same year.)

During this period of 1927-30, I do not remember any rift between the solid phalanx of these two opposition groups or between the two stalwart leaders. There was healthy rivalry between them and each was, as it were, a complement of the other. Honours of the debates went to each almost equally, though, at times, one shone more than the other, specially in the eyes of their respective followers and admirers. I consider this period as the halcyon days for the Opposition. A number of other gentlemen added to this strength of opposition groups.

The Swaraj Party did not take part in the elections of 1930. It will be remembered that in 1930 the Congress, at some places, chose to send members of the scheduled caste to legislatures in preference to others. To that extent, I fear, the legislature was poorer for the absence of that party and its formidable leader, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. The veteran Mr. Chintamani was there with his group ; but the Opposition Party, being weak in number, could not naturally create the same impression on Government circles in spite of the unique personality of Mr. C. Y. Chintamani of encyclopaedic memory and fearless debating powers.

After the Gandhi-Irwin pact of 1931 a number of details had to be worked out and knotty problems

concerning individual cases had to be solved. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was in constant consultations with the then Chief Secretary and was remarkably successful in his efforts. In fact, he is a good peace-maker and negotiator owing to his special gifts.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant had been marked out for some thing great and high. Having thrown in his lot with the Congress, he submitted himself cheerfully to all the sacrifices and sufferings which the programme of that party entailed on its members.

He became a member of the Central Legislative Assembly and the skilful way in which he crossed swords with the then Finance Member, Sir James Grieg, cannot be easily forgotten. Little did anybody know then that Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant would become the Premier of the United Provinces to work (or wreck ?) the limited provincial autonomy given by the Government of India Act of 1935.

Though requested and warned by his friends that Pantji (the name by which he is familiarly called by us, his friends, followers and admirers) should not take up heavy work and that he should leave himself ample time for general guidance and reflection, Pantji took up Finance and General Administration, including Law and Order as his portfolio. He was Leader of the

House and Leader of the Congress Party in the legislature. He was not in very good health. He never spared himself. The result was that his health deteriorated.

It is not for me to say anything about his career as a Premier. That must be left to others. About some aspects of his administration opinions have differed. But there is no doubt that he did his best in the circumstances in which he was placed and that he worked very hard.

Pantji has been forging ahead and rising from one step to another in his influence, his *forensic* powers and leadership. In my judgment, if he goes on like this, he is bound to be called upon, sooner rather than later, to the presidentship of the Congress which is the premier political organisation of this country.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant is a gentleman of very simple habits and of an unostentatious nature. He is very courteous, polite and affable. He has a sense of humour which, in public life is a saving grace. He has a great capacity of making friends and, what is more, of keeping them. He is forcible and inoffensive in his arguments and can appeal to the emotions of the people in an effective manner. Magnanimity or absence of intolerance towards those who differ as

regards some Congress principles or its *modus operandi* is a weakness which is not lacking in a number of Congressmen. But Pantji does not hesitate to display this weakness in social, private or public relations.

Pantji is a good family man. I know personally that he is a good father, a good husband and a good relative.

God willing, Pantji has a great and glorious future before him, only if he will be careful about his physical health.

AN EXPERIENCED ADMINISTRATOR.

(By Acharya Jugal Kishore)

On the auspicious occasion of Pandit G. B. Pant's birthday anniversary, one's first thought and prayer is that he may live long to continue to serve our motherland and that he may enjoy good health to perform the more arduous tasks, which the country will have to face after having achieved her freedom.

It must indeed be a matter of great satisfaction to him to have seen the day of India's liberation for which he laboured, strove and suffered so much. I am sure, in giving expression to our sense of rejoicing on this occasion I am voicing the sentiments of thousands of his co-workers both inside and outside the legislature and who have always highly valued and appreciated his talents, his judgments and his amiable temperament. To them who have known him rather closely, his life has been a source of great inspiration and emulation. Those who have watched him dealing with critical situations either on the floor of the legislative chambers or in his office at the Secretariat or at great political occasions, have a vivid memory of his tactfulness, his penetrating insight and his courage and determination. More particularly in the Parliamentary sphere his contri-

contributions have been unique and exemplary. The country during the last years since the resumption of office has passed through a very great crisis—crisis in the supply situation and in the political sphere. The people perhaps are not fully aware of his contribution to the solution of these problems. When the history of these times comes to be written, I am confident, any impartial historian will not fail to assess adequately his services.

In the coming few years when the country will be faced with many administrative problems, which a newly freed country must necessarily confront, his vast experience of parliamentary and administrative work and his cool and cautious approach will be of incalculable help and his personality a tower of strength.

May he remain healthy and live long is our earnest prayer.

PANT—THE MAN AND STATESMAN

(By *Promode Kumar Sen, News Editor,
The "Amrita Bazar Patrika".*)

I have only a nodding acquaintance with Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and met him only on two occasions. Journalists busy with desk work have little opportunity to come in closer contact with the phalanx of leaders and workers. Conditions were, however, different before ; and I remember early in my career some who became leaders of destiny were co-workers of journalists. Journalism and public movement were inter-connected, and in many cases leaders of people were pioneers in journalism.

Journalists as a class have better opportunity to study men and movements from an objective standpoint and some of us are therefore better situated in making correct estimates of their worth. Personally I am lucky in this respect, for my career as a journalist started with the Non-co-operation Movement. I had extensive opportunity to take a wider view of the men who have shaped the destiny of our Motherland and watch their doings, though in many cases from a distance. Then, again, being associated with the paper which was started by Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das from its very inception, I was enabled to take closer interest in most of the

leaders who are today at the helm of affairs in different provinces of India. Journalists working in the nationalist papers in that period were more or less identified with the national struggle and in many of us that spirit dies hard even today. Naturally they felt a closer affinity with the national leaders.

C. R. Das had very intimate relations with leaders and lieutenants in various provinces and his "Forward" enjoyed close co-operation of many of them. I quite remember that many of the present-day leaders of U. P. were regular contributors to "Forward". As such I came to know Pandit Pant as one of the prominent figures of the U. P., and was conscious of one of his prominent characteristics, that he was a sturdy man and no seeker of the limelight. The great Motilal and Malaviya were then towering over the province and Jawaharlal was winning the love of the masses, yet one was conscious of the silent work that Pandit Pant was doing in the Congress movement of the province. Not to speak of Motilal, Swaraj Party leadership was largely constituted by U.P. men, although in the old U.P. Council the party was in a minority and had no opportunity to show those dazzling dashes against Dyarchy which were witnessed in the Bengal and C. P. Councils. But Motilal had his day in the Central Assembly and his party

was in collaboration (though unstable) with Jinnah's Independent Party.

Motilal, like C. R. Das, was not destined to enjoy the fruit of his great work. But as the struggle became more intense, the star of U. P. began to shine more brilliantly. So shone the star of Pandit Pant. He had already India-wide fame ; with the intenser phases of the struggle it became wider, till he came to be known as one of the mighty props of the Congress. He got his reward by winning the heart of the millions, and in the U. P. as the natural leader he became the first Congress Premier, when the national body decided to assume the reins of Government in the provinces. For this task, besides being a leader of peoples, Pandit Pant had some additional equipment ; it was his deep knowledge of law. In the freedom's battle in the civilized way, the lawyer plays an important role, and it was true of America (as Burke pointed out) as it is of India. And Pandit Pant is one of the eminent lawyers India has produced.

But law has not turned Pandit Pant into a crafty politician. It is apparent to anyone who knows him, however remotely, that he is incapable of indulging in shady politics. He is like one of the old patriarchs who is only conscious of his mission of making the

masses self-conscious and happy. Carrying on of government Pandit Pant considers a means to attain the supreme objective and not an end by itself. That is why you see the Cabinet team round him as a sort of brotherhood, and necessarily he has to be indulgent to the erring ones and protect them from hostile criticisms. But it has a great advantage too, in maintaining the homogeneity and inner harmony of the body.

By migrating to the U. P. with the "Patrika", I had a greater opportunity to closely observe Pandit Pant and his activities. It is needless to dwell on his sacrifices, for, firstly, these are well-known and, secondly, they are the hall-mark of all frontrankers who are 'serving the Motherland. After incarceration in the Ahmednagar Fort, Pandit Pant came out with an ailing body, but in spirit, he was like a giant refreshed. He verily shone like a sun on the U. P.'s political firmament. Ignoring all bodily handicaps he plunged headlong into the oriented movement, for a supreme bid to secure freedom for the Motherland. His energy was amazing and I felt that this time he was conscious of the near-end of the great task. He went about from one part of the province to the other addressing thousands. The speeches came in torrents, but some of them were worth preserving.

I was particularly struck by one of his themes. It was indeed a novel principle. The Pakistan cry at that time created a frenzy among the Muslim masses, Pandit Pant argued against it, but used no bitter invectives; his arguments were remarkably persuasive. He told the masses that every inch of India was Hindustan as well as Pakistan. That is true, as every lover of India knows. Undoubtedly the U. P. was one of the citadels of the Muslim League and the majority of Muslims were in no mood to listen to Pandit Pant's gentle logic nor to appreciate his welling love for the masses. But we all know that his counsel did not entirely go in vain. In the last elections U. P. was the only province in whole of India which returned a large number of Congress Muslims and Nationalist Muslims from the communal electorate inspite of the glaring official machinations. In one particular district, the Nationalist Muslims got all the seats, including the woman's.

Whatever criticisms we may indulge in from time to time against them, it is a truism to say that most of our leaders are noble souls. Undoubtedly Pandit Pant is a notable among them. It is his heart which enables him look upon the Hindu and the Muslim with an impartial eye. Though a staunch Hindu of heart,

he is incapable of doing anything which hurts the Muslim. But he is not a man to swallow any sort of communal nonsense. He ignored the League fulminations half truths and falsehood for a long time, but when he found that they were incorrigible he gave them the final quietus in that memorable Assembly speech. He showed his mettle, he would give no quarter to untruth and unrighteousness.

Now that the Leaguers in the Indian Union are assuming a reasonable attitude, Pandit Pant will perhaps have an easy task in turning his attention to the real problem facing the masses. But the Muslim in this province knows in his heart of hearts that he will get nothing but a square deal from the ministry, and it is certain nobody is going to touch a single hair of his unless he himself goes crazy.

Really speaking, as the old saying goes, no proper estimate of a person can be made until after he passes away. At the same time, one cannot but be touched by the abiding qualities in a person whom thousands know and love. And U. P. knows intimately that Pandit Pant has such qualities in abundance. I first saw him at the Circuit House at Almora talking genially to any and every sort of people. Evidently many of them were self-seekers, careerists and *jo-hukums*, who are

prone to propitiate the power that be. I was not impressed by that rally. It was too commonplace. I was more inspired by sight of the house where Pantji was born, and pondered that here came into being a noble soul who would shed gentle light on his country. Equally interested I felt in his maternal uncle's house where he passed his school days. I recalled to mind the picture I had seen of young Pant, that serious-looking, genial, lovable face !

A GIANT AMONG MEN.

(By Durga Das, Joint Editor, The "Hindustan Times")

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant is a very modest man. Only once during my long association with him have I found him in a reminiscent mood. He recalled that after hearing him speak in a college debate his Principal forecast that he would one day be a Prime Minister. The forecast came true. There are very few men in India's public life who equal Pantji in parliamentary gifts. A giant in body he has gigantic brain power too.

I first met Pantji during the Lucknow session of the Indian National Congress. I had attended all the Congress sessions and reported the A. I. C. C. proceedings since 1917. I thought I knew every one who mattered in Congress politics. At Lucknow I found a new star on the A. I. C. C. horizon. When Pantji got up to speak I was indifferent, thinking he was an unknown figure. Hardly had he spoken a couple of minutes when I was all attentive. Every word he spoke was well chosen and every sentence well poised. His advocacy was telling. I said to myself: "This man has a future in the Congress High Command."

Soon thereafter Pantji left the provincial legislative

sphere and came to the Central Legislative Assembly. He was elected Deputy Leader of the Assembly Congress Party. Mr. Bhulabhai Desai's eloquence, Pantji's advocacy and Mr. Satyamurti's thrusts made so powerful combination that the Treasury Benches used to reel under the blows of the trio. Pantji was the Big Bertha of the party. If a budget speech was to be answered or if a complex administrative problem was to be dissected, it was invariably Pantji who spoke for the Congress Party. His deep study and his resourceful mind were capable of meeting any situation. After he had spoken there was little the Government could do to retrieve the situation. On his record in the Central Assembly alone the U. P. leader deserves a high place in the annals of the Congress movement.

But the test of his greatness was yet to come. He became the first Prime Minister of the U. P. Government. I had the privilege of living very close to him during the period of his premiership. I watched him at work in office and at home. I saw him lead the U. P. Legislative Assembly. As an administrator his best asset was integrity and high character. As a leader of men he inspired confidence by his selflessness, his human sympathy and his remarkable gift of touching the heart of those who constituted his group.

The Secretariate Pundits found in him a super-pundit and admitted his high calibre. The legislators found him more skilful than any in their ranks. Congress workers found it a pleasure to work under the direction of one who could not be deflected from the path of duty.

Propagandists have alleged that the U. P. Congress Ministry was unfair to Muslims. Left to himself Pantji would have invited the Muslim League to form a coalition with the Congress party. But even though, this did not happen, he was most generous to the Muslim community.

Sir Harry Haig, Governor during a major portion of Pantji's premiership, was most zealous about minority interests. Sir Harry personally studied secretariate files and kept a very close eye on his responsibility for the protection of minorities. In his speech at the East Indian Association on his retirement Sir Harry Haig paid a tribute to Pantji's administration which is unequalled by any Governor to any other Ministry. The tribute was not to Pantji's personal ability, but to his impartial administration and to the manner in which he protected the interests of minorities, especially Muslims.

Pantji is essentially a man of learning. The hustle of political life is not to his liking. But in the country's

struggle for freedom he has donned the uniform of a Congress soldier. He has never faltered in the path of service and sacrifice he has chosen. But if he is led once against the path of constructive effort, he will handle any job entrusted to him with distinction.

A VALIANT FIGHTER

(By Mr. Justice P. N. Saprú)

Among the leaders who have helped to build up public life in this province, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant stands high. Many and varied have been the services which he has rendered to the land of his birth. He is held in esteem and affection by all those who value ability and character.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was for many years the Deputy Leader of the Congress Opposition in the Legislative Assembly. Not only was he an eloquent speaker, but, what is more, his words carried weight for they had study and conviction behind them. Panditji has left a permanent impression upon the work of the Indian Legislative Assembly. His brilliant speeches will for ever adorn the pages of the Indian Hansard.

He has been valiant fighter in the cause of India's independence. His sacrifices and suffering have endeared him to the people of this province. Today they know that he is irreplaceable as Premier, for no other provincial leader has the same hold over the popular imagination as Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant.

By nature Panditji is modest and unassuming. When you meet him you can never feel that you are

talking to the Premier of the biggest and most difficult province in this country. Rich and poor alike have equal access to him. He carries his learning lightly, and is never dictatorial either in manner or speech.

One thing which has impressed me about Panditji is his love for the poor. He is essentially a people's man ; the tiller of the soil and the worker in our factories have in him a warm friend. No social order based on injustice can flourish for any length of time in any country. Panditji knows this and patiently he has been striving as Premier to redress those social inequalities which constitute a blot on our civilization. For the Harijans too have in him a warm friend.

Panditji is a sturdy nationalist who knows no defeat. It has been given to the present generation to serve this country with failures, but surely sacrifice and suffering have meaning in the life of a people and who can deny that if our country is nearer its goal of independence today, it is mainly because of the work of Panditji and other stalwart leaders who have placed the country before self ?

Communalism is foreign to his nature. With faith in the righteousness of India's cause, he has endeavoured manfully to keep the national flag flying. Often in our moments of despair we have felt as if the ideal

of an Indian nation was a mirage, but Panditji has never had any such feeling. There is a mystic underlying this country and for Panditji India's integrity has been as sacred as her independence. The worst disaster that can befall any people is to lose faith in their destiny but Panditji is of undaunted spirit and his example has served to keep the *morale of the people* high.

Panditji is a charming conversationalist. In his quite unassuming manner he can throw light on many problems of high finance. Unlike most economists he has a keen sense of humour. In debate, he can make mince meat of his opponents, but he is singularly free from all malice. And that is why even his opponents feel an instinctive affection for him. The purity of his life is a source of inspiration to us all. Never have I, even in private conversation, noticed Panditji depart from that high idealism which has become a part of his being. In the Councils of the Congress Cabinet his words carried weight for there is wisdom and experience and knowledge behind them.

The position that he has built up for himself in the public life of this province and the country is the result of long years of sustained effort and firm adherence to high principles. He is an example for all young men to

follow. It is this province's good fortune that it has as its head a statesman of Panditji's outstanding ability. That it may be given to him to serve the land which he loves so dearly and which holds him in such high estimation to serve for many more years to come will be the earnest prayer of all his friends and well-wishers on this auspicious occasion of the anniversary of his 60th birthday.

THE INDISPENSABLE HEAD OF CONGRESS GOVERNMENT

(By Sir Jagdish Prasad)

I have known Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant for over twenty years—years so eventful for him and for his country. He deliberately chose a path of much toil, many hardships and disappointments with little prospect of worldly advancement. He did so out of a passionate love for his country and an unflinching faith in its destiny. (He entered the provincial legislature in 1924 as a member of the Swaraj Party and soon rose to be its leader.) And he made an admirable leader, accomplished in all the arts of the parliamentary debate, tactful in the handling of men and affairs, unruffled suave, commanding the devoted loyalty of his party not so much by his intellectual eminence but what is of greater importance in securing willing allegiance, the charm, simplicity and integrity of his character. Though he and I sat on opposite sides in the legislature, political differences never for a moment soured our social relations. I soon came to have a great regard for him as a genuine and highly gifted servant of the people and that regard and esteem have deepened with the years. (He was elected to the

Central Assembly about 1934 and very soon made his mark as Deputy Leader of the Congress Party and from a provincial figure came to be recognised as among the select band of India's acknowledged political leaders.

When the Congress took office in 1937, there was no question that Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant would be the Premier of the United Provinces. It was with deep regret that one learnt that he had to surrender office after a tenure of only about thirty months, in pursuance of an all-India policy laid down by the Congress Working Committee. From 1940 he had to go through for over six years all the rigours, anguish and tribulations of one of the darkest periods of our recent history. It was with genuine relief that he was welcomed back to the Province once again as its premier.

Twenty years of intermittent strife and suffering have left their traces on his massive physique. But there has been no loss of intellectual vigour and a great deal of toughening of the moral fibre and of the resolve to see India as a free and great nation.

It is the earnest prayer of his countrymen that for many years to come, Pandit Govind Pant may give India the benefit of his ripe wisdom and unflinching patriotism.

In the difficult tasks that await him he can count on the good will and support of those who value sincerity, balance, uprightness, high ability and selfless devotion to the public weal in their political leaders.

No greater tribute could be paid to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant than the opinion universally held that he is indispensable as head of a Congress government in the United Provinces.

A STAUNCH GANDHI-ITE

(By The Late Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth)

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant has a considered philosophy of politics which is warmed with a generous humanity and a sincere vision. His humanity is synonymous with solicitude for the underdog and the vision that spurs him on is the burning passion for the freedom of his country. Dangers of the storm, presence of rocks, the ruthless enemy attacks—both from above and below do not unnerve him. Like Casablanca, he may perish with his post but he will not go down with his heart in his boots. Courage, perseverance and hope amounting to faith govern his politics and his political career broad-based on the pure principle of nationalism offers a unique example of the success that follows a man of conviction.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant comes of an influential and well-known brahmin family of the Kumaon Division. His scholastic career was both distinguished and striking. It is certain that if he had tried to secure a government job the bureaucratic portals would have welcomed so promising a man to their fold, but fates were kind to him and his countrymen. They spared him for far more valuable services to the bigger cause of

freedom and paved the way for his attainments as a first Premier of a popular government of these provinces.

The Pant Government, inspite of that nauseating trash known as the Pirpur Report, treated the minorities with overgenerosity, and in order to combat the disease of drink prohibition was set on foot in several districts. The services particularly the 'Steel Frame' realised the tough fibre of the new Government and adjusted themselves, willy nilly, to the change. During the comic interlude of two and a half years the tallest among the sundried beaucrates had to eat the humble pie and bow before the Government. The war in Europe raised far-reaching issues and the Congress went into wilderness.

Steel-frame again emerged with its customary hideousness and under the limitless scope of the D. I. R. launched on a career of repression, badinage and exploitation. Hindus suffered considerably and Mr. Jinnah who had celebrated the 'Day of Deliverance' fished in the troubled waters. Difficulties of nationalism were the opportunities of the Muslim League. Toadies fattened on the misfortune of the patriots. But the Indian scene is again witnessing a change. The wheel seems to have taken a full turn. Flatterers and opportunists are gasping for their lives. The Indian nation is

In Happy Mood



Pandit Pant is going to address a public meeting.

again on the move. History is fast repeating itself and the province is preparing to end the unworthy Section 93 regime made still worse by the Governor, Sir Maurice Hallet.

Pandit Pant holds an important place in the All-India Congress Working Committee. His words carry weight with them. The Pant resolution sealed the fate of Mr. Subhas Chandra Bose at Tripura and restored the old 'Congress Guard' to power. A loyal supporter of the Gandhian Technique of fight, ready to submit to the discipline of his party with military precision and courage Pandit Pant is an uncompromising and powerful enemy of the British Imperialism and alien rule in this country.

Kotra.

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A POLITICIAN AND LEADER

(*By Mukand Lal, Bar-at-Law*)

The Editor of this presentation volume has honoured me by asking me to contribute an article on Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, the Premier of the United Provinces. For a life long friend who was associated with him in the public life and who had known him as a personal friend from school days, this is, indeed, a great privilege to write reminiscence of early associations. I am doing so in the form of an essay and not as an article on my personal friend, whom I had the privilege to call by his pet name *Thapu*, along with other intimate friends, and whom in private letters I address as Govind.

I spent four years of the first part of my school education at Pauri (1900-1904) where I first saw Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, where he had come to visit his father, Pandit Manorath Pant, who was then in Government service in Garhwal. I cultivated his acquaintance through my most intimate and greatest friends, two Joshi brothers—Pandit Upendra Chandra and Man Mohan—who were my school fellows, at the Pauri Mission School. Alas, both of them met with premature death.

To me friends mean more than members of my family and near relations. We are attached to the members of our families and relations by natural ties and, more or less, for selfish reasons. But our affection and attachment to our friends is spontaneous and disinterested. It is for the sake of friendship, and the joy of friendship. It gives me greatest pleasure to meet old friends and think of them. It is rightly and most appropriately said " friends are roses in the garden of life ". In my garden of life, Govind is one of such roses which gives me joy. And to write something of him gives me greatest delight. This is an opportunity to defuse the fragrance of this Indian rose —Govind Ballabh Pant.

I went to Almora in July of 1904 with a view to study for the Entrance or Matric Examination ; and joined the Ramsay Collegiate High School. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and Pandit Har Govind Pant had already passed F. A. from the Ramsay College and were studying for B. A. at Allahabad. They used to come to Almora during summer vacations. That is how and when I met them.

The year when I went to Almora—(1904) was also the year of the victory of Japan over Russia, which, to us, the students, meant victory of Asia over Europe.

We students celebrated it. In our Debating Society we praised the heroic deeds and patriotism of the Japanese. I felt deeply over the dependence and backward condition of our country. I was very keen about and interested in political and social matters. So naturally Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant who was at College, in the plains, and was himself interested in politics attracted my attention. I cultivated his friendship and used to visit him frequently in his room, in Dania, where he lived with his maternal grand fathers—Pandit Podri Datt Joshi and Pandit Raghubar Datt Joshi.

I first heard the name of Deshbhakt Bal Gangadhar Tilak from Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, who had read Tilak trial proceedings, and used to get his weekly *Marhata*. Tilak was the first political martyr for the sake of political convictions. His trial and conviction was our first lesson in patriotism. The partition of Bengal in 1905 was second lesson in patriotism. We used to debate about the partition of Bengal. It infused new life into the student community. We established a social club in which we used to hold debates and meetings. Once Miss Hendley, a European missionary teacher, presided. She asked me why we called it Social Club. It was associated with socialism which was an undesirable thing. I did not then realise

the significance of her objection and socialism.

After passing the Entrance Examination in the summer of 1906, I joined the Muir Central College, Allahabad, in July 1906. Pandit Govind Ballabh was also there. But I could not get the accommodation in the same boarding house where he was living. So I got fewer opportunities to meet him. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was a brilliant student; and was absorbed in his studies. With me the case was the reverse. I was more interested in political meetings, lectures and political literature than in my College studies. I could not see much of Pandit Govind Ballabh at Allahabad. But I got another opportunity to come into closer contact with him at Almora again. I fell ill at Allahabad in the Spring of 1907. I was advised to go to the hills. I went to Almora, where, during the Summer, I again had the pleasure of seeing more of him.

I was again separated from him. Lala Lajpat Rai had been deported to Mandalay. His deportation rekindled the fire of patriotism in us. We students went to a pine forest, where we hung Lala Lajpat Rai's portrait on a tree and delivered speeches on his work and sacrifice. In the Spring of 1908, Lala Lajpat Rai's son, Pyare Lal, and Jaswant Rai, the Editor of the *Punjabi*, came to Almora for a chance. Due to my

interest in politics and love for our country, I became intimate with them ; and finally one morning I quietly left Almora in April 1908 with them for Lahore ; and for two months I worked at the *Punjabi* office and sat at the feet of Lala Lajpat Rai who had been by then released from Mondalay and returned to Lahore.

Lala Lajpat Rai, in June 1908, sent me to Garhwal to do famine relief work. It was the greatest famine of modern times in Garhwal. I called on the then Dy. Commissioner of Garhwal, Mr. Allen. When I entered his office he asked me to take off my shoes saying it was Indian custom to take off shoes when seeing a Saheb. He asked why I was doing this famine work. He smelt politics in it. He sent instructions to his rural Police and Patwaris to watch my movements and report to him all about my work and what I said and did. After the completion of famine work my father sent me to College to complete my Collegiate education. But before allowing me to go to rejoin College, my father took from me all my diaries and photos of political leaders and patriots. I first joined Bareilly College, where I was only for four months. One C. I. D. Inspector was sent to join the College as my class mate. I have mentioned these two facts to show how students were suspected in 1908.

(My close association with Pandit Govind Ballabh

Pant started on my return from England, in the winter of 1919, when I attended the Kumaun Political Conference and started practice at the Bar. I had often to come to Naini Tal on professional work. I saw him whenever I went to Naini Tal.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant continued his interest in politics of Kumaun as a politician. In 1920 he stood from Naini Tal, for the first Reformed Council of U.P., as a liberal candidate. Mr. C. Y. Chintamani had high opinion of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and I understand had asked him to stand for the Council elections as a Liberal candidate.)

Congress was boycotting the elections in 1920. I did not stand for the election in 1920, not that I agreed with the Congress in the boycott policy but I thought when our only all-India political body (Congress) says 'do not enter legislatures', I should not. There was another reason also. I had returned to my district, Garhwal, in 1919. October, after six years absence from India. I wanted to see where I stood in the public life of the District Garhwal. I attended 1919 Congress at Amritsar and in 1920 special session in September at Calcutta and the annual session in December 1920 at Nagpur.

I have still with me the snap of Mr. Jinnah, which I

took of him, addressing the Congress, from the *Pandal* as a delegate of the Congress at Nagpur. I stayed with Mr. Jinnah in the same house as a delegate in Amritsar in 1919 December. I also called on Mr. Jinnah in 1921, at his house, in Bombay. What a contrast—Jinnah of 1919 to 1921 and of 1946-47! Until 1931 he was quite a sound nationalist. Like Mrs. Bessant, Mr. Jinnah can never play second fiddle. He must always remain No. 1 in the public life; that is both his weakness and strength. Make him the all-India leader and he will be as good as Mr. Patel, in politics.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant is a farsighted politician and practical man. He was then convinced that Kumaun was not yet ready to be congressite. Kumaun had its own local problems. Then Congress meant going into wilderness and boycott of schools and courts and government services which Kumaun Division could not afford to do. He was first a Kumauni and then anything else. So he did not join the Congress then. To me, the Congress was a patriotic movement to which all Indian patriots should have belonged. In the years 1920-21, I enrolled Congress members in Garhwal and lead the anti-Begar movement there. But I was against boycott of schools, colleges, law courts and government services. My

poor and backward district, Garhwal, could not afford to give up all these creations of the British Government. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant held the same view then.

The result of 1920 elections both for Naini Tal and Garhwal was the same. I did not stand for election so I did not enter the Legislature, which was boycotted by the Congress. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant did not get in because the election was fought not on political party tickets but on local-social politics. The election cry in Naini Tal was *lamdhotia* meaning rich versus *chhotdhotia*, meaning poor. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was considered the candidate and representative of the richer, urban, classes ; and his opponent posed as the representative of poor villagers. The majority of voters in Naini Tal district were *chhotdhotia* (men with small-loin-cloth) as against *Lamdhotia* (men with long-loin-cloth). The voters did not vote on merits. The opponent of Pandit G. B. Pant did not know English. Pandit Pant had few equals as a candidate even in the plains what to say of hills. Yet such are the vagaries of the palling breath or power of communal cries that Pandit Govind Ballabh was defeated in 1920 elections by a man of no consequence, who had no place in public life.

Although I did not stand for the election in 1920

due to my respect for the Congress which decided the boycott of legislatures, yet even if I did contest the election in Garhwal I might have met the same fate as did Pandit G. B. Pant for similar sectarian reasons.

In Garhwal, 1920 election was fought on purely communal or sectarian grounds. The sitting member (nominated) Pandit Tara Datt Gairola, M.A. LL. B., the leader of Garhwal Bar, and the most learned and literary man and a great public worker of Garhwal, happened to be a Brahman. His opponent, Thakur Jodha Singh, a retired Tahsildar, was a Kshatriya. He was the President and founder of the Kshatriya Samiti. Kshatriyas are in majority in Garhwal, so the communal cry carried the day.

(In 1923 Council elections both of us stood for U. P. Council elections, I from Garhwal and Pandit Govind Ballabh from Naini Tal, as independent candidates. I defeated the President of the Kshatriya Samiti (the sitting member). On being elected, both of us joined the Congress Swaraj Party, organised by Pandit Motilal Nehru and Desh Bandhu Chitranjan Das. The congress, as such, was against Council entry. But Congressmen were permitted to stand for election. Congress, as a party, did not contest elections. Orthodox

Congressmen did not even stand for 1923 elections. Pandit Motilal Nehru was elected to the Central Assembly. There was no outstanding Congressman available to lead the Swaraj Party in the U. P. Council. I was known to Pandit Motilal Nehru since my return from England in 1919. I had taken part in the Congress sessions of 1919, 1920 and 1921. So he appointed me along with four others (Sangam Lal, Jaikaran Nath Misra, Mohan Lal Saksena and A. P. Dube) into an Executive Committee of the Swaraj Party, to lead the party in the U. P. Council.

When the U. P. Council started functioning I and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant were nominated by the Government to the Forest Board, which was to deal with all Kumaun grievances, forest and otherwise, and to act as an advisory board for all matters concerning the Kumaun Division (which consists of Garhwal, Almora and Naini Tal). Until then Congress stood for non-cooperation with Government. The Swaraj Party, which was allowed to contest the elections, was not permitted to hold any office, even honorary, under the Government or in the Government, or even the elective posts, such as the post of the Dy. President (In 1923-24 the post of the President was not elective). When the members of the U. P. Council Swaraj Party (which consisted then

only of 24 members) saw my and Pandit Pant's name as members of the Forest Board. they asked me and Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant to resign from the membership of the Forest Board. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant resigned and won the approbation of the Swaraj Party, and became popular with the party. On the other hand, I declined to resign on the ground that for my constituency (Garhwal) to be a member of the Forest Board was of vital importance, as my constituency's grievances were mostly connected with the forest and local matters and reclamation of land (Nayabad). I also argued that a committee or board inside the Council to discharge legislative or advisory functions was as good or as bad as the membership of the Council. Committee or Board's membership did not carry any salary. I represented the matter to Pandit Motilal. I told him frankly that if I am not allowed to remain in the Forest Board I would have to resign from the Council as my constituency would not tolerate my abstaining from the Forest Board. Pandit Motilal made an exception in my favour and allowed me to continue the membership of the Forest Board.

(Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant's sagacity and far-sightedness won him the leadership of the Swaraj Party. When the Party decided to elect leader, Mr. Pant

was elected the Leader of the Swaraj Party, before the first year of Council's life was completed.

The Swaraj Party, under the leadership of Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, decided to stand for select committees and departmental committees. Pandit Pant himself came into the Forest Board which was later enlarged into Kumaun Advisory Committee. Both of us worked together in the Forest Board (Kumaun Advisory Committee), through which we did our best to remove the grievances of the people of Kumaun and framed rules and regulations for Kumaun Division. As the leader of the Swaraj Party, he justified our choice. His political sagacity, tact and powers of leadership and statesmanship were recognised by the House. He was very popular with the Swaraj Party members and with Government members and local officials as well. His speeches and resolutions and amendments were always on the side of moderation and level-headedness.

He maintained his leadership in the next Council (1926-30) also, in which the Congress participated openly and without reserve. The membership of the Congress Party in 1924 Council was increased from 24 to 30. He led the opposition very successfully.)

As leader of the Party, Pandit G. B. Pant put me

up as a party candidate for the office of Deputy President in 1927. I was supported by the Muslim and independent members, in addition to the Congress members, of the Council. I secured a majority over the combined votes of the two other candidates who were supported by the official block, nominated members and some of the landlords. I made the tactical mistake of not walking out of the Council when the Congress walked out of it in 1930, just before the next elections. I took the view that since I was elected to the office of the Deputy President by the vote of other parties also and got the support of the majority of the members of the Council, it would be unfair if I walked out with my party, particularly, when after a couple of months the Council itself was to be dissolved.

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, as far-sighted politician, played his cards very well; and day after day he became more and more popular with the Congress Party. He made best use of his talents and opportunities which won for him the premier place in the counsels of the Congress Party. He followed the orthodox policy of the Congress. As a leader of the Provincial Legislature, his leadership of the party in the Legislature proved most successful.

(When the Congress members were elected by

overwhelming majority in 1937 elections he was again elected leader of the Congress Assembly Party. He became the Chief Minister of our province. As I know his bent of mind and statesmanlike qualities, he would have not voted for the resignation of the U. P. Ministry in 1933, if left to his choice and judgment. He would have liked to prove his ability as an administrator and as the Chief Minister. But his political sagacity prevailed upon him and he followed the lead of the Party.)

He is a leader in the modern sense. He, as all popular leaders do, feels the pulse and studies the mood of the people and then does what the people desire. During 1918 elections in England I saw a Cartoon—a Labour leader following the crowd hat in hand. That is the correct position of a modern leader. The leader, if he wants to maintain his leadership, has got to stoop to conquer and to lead.

Congress leaders made the mistake in not forming coalition ministries in the provinces in 1937. Had they done so the Pakistan would have not been born and bisection of India avoided. If Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was left alone to do what he thought best, I am convinced, he would have formed coalition ministry in the U. P.; and he would have given the

lead to other provinces. He would have shown what a born leader can achieve if allowed to lead according to his belief and inclination.

In spite of his failing health, he participated fully and suffered equally the consequences of passive resistance and non-cooperation with other leaders of the Congress at critical moments.

His work and place in the counsels of the Congress High Command are too well-known to the public to be mentioned here. His amazing capacity to work and to find solutions for knotty problems fully justifies his leadership and entitles him to all the praise we can bestow on him as the most successful Chief Minister of our province.

THE TOUGH MAN WITH SOFT HEART

(By Jiwan Chandra Pant)

Six feet two inches tall in his boots, U. P.'s Prime Minister, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant stands head and shoulders above the common man. This should be obvious even to the most unobservant eye so far as his physical stature is concerned. But it is more so in respect of his moral and intellectual stature. This is as true today when he is steering the ship of a province seething with discontent, as it was a decade ago when as deputy leader of the Congress party in the Central Legislative Assembly he was winning laurels in Delhi and Simla ; or a couple of decades ago when the keen eye of Pandit Motilal Nehru fell upon him and he was chosen to lead the Swaraj party in the U. P. Council ; or even some four decades ago when as student of the law classes he had taken up cudgils against those in authority. He won the very first round then, and has been winning rounds after rounds since then, not by bluster, not by virtue of his physical stature, which, of course, has a magnetic charm of its own, but by virtue of the strength that comes from within a clean conscience an iron will and a sober head.

Notwithstanding the magnetic powers which his huge

body possess, it has during the last several years been more of a hindrance to him than any positive aid. The layer of fat might contain a reserve force of energy to use up in moments of stress, but in day-to-day life it considerably impedes his movements. The number of maladies from which he has suffered in the past and from which he continues to suffer today, are numerous.

Pandit Pant has been too much spoken of for his slow movements and irregularity in keeping engagements. But it is seldom realised that the physical ailments from which he suffers, weigh him down almost every hour of the day. It is an hour-to-hour struggle with physical maladies, some trivial, some serious; some chronic, others occasional, and it is by sheer force of will that he keeps about moving at the speed which public life today demands. I have seldom known him enjoy sound sleep or enjoy a full meal, yet notwithstanding the torture of insomnia, he never gets up with a frown in the morning. The usual smile in the face and the benevolent light in the eyes are, if at all, more prominent in the morning than at any other time of the day.

Looking back in retrospect, I well remember the unusual luster in his eyes, and the more-than-usual softness in his face and voice, on those mornings when later on in the day he had taken a far-reaching

decision or made an important pronouncement or a weighty speech.

A troublesome malady in itself, insomnia may well be a boon in disguise to one who has enough control over one's thoughts and a large number of problems to solve. But what would you think of him whose free movement of trunk is hampered by lumbago of a very long standing, and shattering blows from police *lathis* and who has, in addition to chronic constipation, acute piles, a permanenty bad throat, a bad heart and hernia which has gone beyond the stage of operation. I have seen him practically confined to bed for about two years. If he moves today as freely as actually he does, and in fact, if he has succeeded in regaining all this control of movements, it is largely through sheer assertion of his will power. I feel if he were to tell the hidden story of his struggle with physical maladies, it would only be a little less thrilling than the one narrated by President Roosevelt.

Tradition has classified great men in three categories—those who are born great—those who make themselves great—and of course, those on whom greatness is thrust. There would be many who would assert that Pandit Pant made himself great. But I believe he was born great. The qualities which have raised him to the

position he occupies today and enabled him to give to the society so much of that which is best in him, have not been acquired by any rigid discipline nor were they elaborately planned. They were innate in him and manifested themselves as and when the situation demanded. These traits had manifested themselves in his early childhood and student days and have persisted throughout, growing, of course, in richness and colour as time passed on, but inherently the same as fifty or forty years ago

Take for instance his memory. It is wonderful. He claims he has seldom forgotten a thing which he wanted to recall later. He can well remember a face seen long before, a name heard long ago, a passage or date learnt by heart in the student days, an argument or point made years before. He has a specially good memory for facts and figures and for odd pieces of news. Once he has gone through a letter he can reply to all the points raised in it, weeks afterwards, without the necessity of having to go through it again. If he had gone through a book and made his notes, which he invariably does if the subject is new, he can well dispense with the book or the brief, except if need be, for purpose of giving long quotations.

Take another aspect, for example. It is seldom that

we come across a man so catholic in views and so accommodating in temperament. His personal relations with one and all have been cordial in the extreme, whether it was during student days, or at the local bar in Naini Tal, or in the Legislative Council in the Montford days. There has never been any feeling of personal rivalry. If he moved a vote of censure, the language was exceptionally chaste and dignified. It touched a higher chord even in the heart of the person against whom it was moved. Retaliation or undignified criticism are foreign to his nature.

Some of his most enthusiastic admirers are those who had opposed him in the past, and who had later on been won over by unexpected magnanimity. His bitterest enemies have always respected him and confided in him to an unusual extent. Among the present band of Congressmen, he is one of those who have a long record of parliamentary career, but one has never known him called up for an unparliamentary remark. This is as true in his private life as in his public life.

I have had occasion to see him at the closest quarter for a number of years and was always impressed with the universal respect he commanded. I shall illustrate my point with a reference to his achievements in the Central Legislature. He was not a conversationalist of

the order of Bhulabhai and lacked the physical energy and sharp wit of Satyamurti. He was indifferent to personal appearance and often ran away from pressmen. But by the time the very first session was over he found himself one of the highly respected figures in the Central Legislature.

Extremists, hot heads and moderates, all in the Congress Party, looked up to him alike for guidance and could unfold their difficulties to him. Members of other parties realised that his views would in the long run count with his leader and the party. Government Benches realised that it would be difficult to waylay him. They were not so much afraid of his eloquence as of his logic. He could be merciless in criticism yet moderate in language, and this looked very embarrassing when his speech came in cold print.

One who has worked with him for any length of time can not but be impressed with the thoroughness with which he goes into each and every case that comes before him. It is akin to the thoroughness of a lawyer before he argues an important case in the court or that of a first rate surgeon who studies his patient minutely before putting him on the table. No aspect of the matter seems to escape his attention. He probes into the matter with the scientist's attention, sifts the true

from the false, distinguishes the stuff from the chaff, the practical from the impractical, the long range point of view from the short range one, and yet does not lose sight of the human side of the matter. It is here that his value as a man of deliberations lies. He is never in a hurry to come to a decision, but once he makes up his mind, he sticks to it with a silent determination, the like of which it is difficult to come across.

It would appear that he judges men and situations as if by intuition. If one were to judge by his success in handling men and meeting unexpected situations, one can say without hesitation that his intuition is seldom off the mark. But to me it appears that behind all this is the varied experience he has of men and the supreme confidence of the man in himself, in his ability to cope with any unpleasant situation and above all in the conviction that the attitude taken by him can stand any test giving more than a fair deal to the other party. If he carries his proposition, it is not by the proverbial big stick or the loud voice or the hair splitting logic. His magnetic personality wins half the opposition and the remaining half is disarmed by an appeal to the commonsense and sense of fair play.

He has a unique knack at touching the higher chords of sentiment. He would seldom contradict, would never

attribute motives, rarely sermonize. If one persists in an unreasonable attitude he would silence one with a good humoured joke.

I have never seen him hurry through any piece of work once he sits down to it. He does not like to get up without having finished it. He then forgets the clock and no disturbance in the surroundings affects his concentration. Visitors may come and go, children may play about at top speed within yards of him and even snatch away his pen and papers, train time may fast be nearing—but none can break his concentration. He would not get up till the work in hand is over. To me it has appeared that he does not feel happy if a piece of work taken in hand remains incomplete.

But with all his good humour, tolerance and forbearance he is a tough man. He has an immense power of silent suffering. He would neither fret nor fume nor kick a row, but would never deflect from a path he had chosen. It is impossible to deceive him either with regard to the merits of a case or the motives underlying any action. I have yet to know the source which has inspired him to maintain such a high record of personal conduct in his private and public life. Present day democracy in India is an exotic growth getting inspiration more from America than England.

Politics, despite all what Mahatma Gandhi has been preaching, is not a clean game. The interests of the party have to be safeguarded and the leader has to keep his eye on the next election. But there have been leaders in the west as there are in India, who think beyond the next election. They think of the next generation. They look beyond the horizon of the party and look at the country and humanity at large. They are in politics not by choice, but by accident. Once in it, they do not run away from its hustle and bustle and its hide and seek. But they have higher things to aspire to, higher standards to maintain and they keep above the dust and dirt of the work-a-day world.

Pandit Pant occupies a unique place in this galaxy of able band of men led by Mahatma Gandhi. His cool head, mature judgment, selfless devotion to duty have been assets to the country in the past and will doubtless remain so in the momentous years to come.

THE POLITICIAN

(By Paripurnanand Varma)

A biographical note or life-sketch should be honestly and frankly critical—that is the desideratum from such notes. I am afraid, I shall fail to answer such a criterion, so far as it relates to Pantji—and heaps like me will reciprocate my frank admission.

Pant the man and Pant the politician are so intermingled and complexly inter-twined that either you love this person and his politics both or you must disown him altogether and in every respect. But, I have yet to meet a sane person, who can, with conscientious arrogance, refuse to love, admire or embellish the sweet suave, genial Pantji.

It is in our nature to search with a very keen eye the faults and failings of every one, but ourselves—and the greater the man, the keener the search. But the bitterest enemy of Pant have failed in their endeavours to find one single moral weakness and failing in him. (Religious by temperament and tradition, affectionate by nature and culture, compassionate by his inherent goodness and a complete gentleman *plus* over-scrupulously honest—in these few words we can define Pant, the man!) His unguent of affection is

applied to all who come in his contact, either with a political wound or a domestic fracture. The essential human touch he gives to every problem of life and the human diagnosis he makes of all developments enables him to reach the very depth of our troubles—and Premier Pant may console more but do little, still, you will go with the content of having met a person, who was patient, kind, understanding and who did not treat you with that haste and terseness, with which you will be received by eminent persons like Sri Sampurnanand.

Thus, we may not agree with the politics of Pant—and no one knows it better than him that modern youth is a great rebel against the reactionary politician Pant. Men and women of young India know it well that Pant belongs to the extreme Right in Congress politics. He is the spokesman of present Congress High Command. He is dedicated to them and they exploit his oratory and diction for annihilating every good cause of the Left. In this respect, Pantji is an imposition or rather infliction upon us. We do not love his politics but (and this is a great but) with his intellectual superiority and awe-inspiring wisdom, he assails his opponents and in his thunder of verbosity, drowns their stannulations. While his men will write the death-

warrant of your political sagacity and party's growth his smiling and kind mouth will enquire about your health, family and children. We may leave his presence with a grumble, resentment or even disdain—but, there can be no ill-will harboured against this great man. We shall always feel having met a very kind uncle or a wonderful brother. In personal understanding and generosity, in catholicity, of taste and pervading domesticity, only one person beats Pantji—and that is Rajendra Babu, otherwise, Pantji is far superior to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru or leaders of his height. For the U. P. people, he is so 'Upani' that we adore him.

Personally speaking, I know little of Pantji. I and my family have enjoyed his benign benison since more than a decade. I have often troubled him with my problems and worries. The back-door to his study has been always open to me. I never felt the trepidation of approaching a Premier or a great leader. His son-in-law and the supporting stick of an over-worked, nerve-fed man, Chandra Dutt Pandey, is an absolute "darling" to me. But, I must confess that I have never known Pantji. I am always afraid in his presence and feel too small and too timid, even stupid before him. His towering intellect belittles me and my bookish wisdom and eclipses my exuberant self-importance. In the back-

He Greets



Pt. Font with his Secretary Dr. C. D. Pande coming out of Council Chamber after hot session.

ground of my mind, I feel the disquieting presence of a person who has amongst his devotees, the giant of a genius—Sri Sampurnanandji, the arch-politician Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, the turbulent Mr. C. B. Gupta and the silent but solid Lal Bahadur Shastri. In spite of all the affection bestowed upon me, I feel uneasy—but, in his absence, I almost feel resentful. Why should I not tell him, upon his face that he is a weak administrator, a procrastinating Premier and unnecessarily linked to Patel & Co. But, my tongue does fail—and it is not the only tongue to fail. Almost every body's tongue fails before him. He is physically big and bulky and mentally great.

My analysis of Pantji has been rather impertinent from my standard. According to our Hindu tradition and culture, we should not 'discuss' our elders. Yet, I know the person discussed will forgive me. He is forgiving by nature and forgetful of such errors by practice. Over-burdened with work, over-exhausted by his stream of visitors and over-assailed by his critics, he has no time to harbour any ill-will or malice against any one. He has his critics—such critics, who are unaccustomed to frank, blitter talks or precise unhyprocratical bare truths. I wonder whether Pantji has a larger number of such critics or Sri Sampurna-

nandji. Both are terribly frank and bitterly truthful.

Emotion does play a great part in Pantji's life. But he has concentrated all his emotion at one place and stored them in one corner—and that corner is the child. He loves children. They are his one weakness. He loves a family life—and that is his charm. He enjoys jokes—and is often learnedly jocular and jocose. His wit is almost cruel against those who pretend to be verbose before him. More often than not—he is very sparing—but occasionally he is a mull to a muffin.

We love Pantji—we respect him—we adore him and we feel very proud of him.

THE PEOPLE'S PREMIER

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A Life - Sketch

September clouds drift lazily across the blue skies of lovely Kumaun. Streamlets and torrents gurggle, setting up echoes through the verdure gleaming with fresh monsoons. The wind whistles through the pines of Almora town, on to west, across the eight-mile lap to the Shayahidevi Hill.

The highest of the hills surrounding Almora, reverently named after the goddess *Shayahidevi*, bears aloft but a score of helmets in the little village of Khoont. A few peasants go out treading the slippery pine cones this bleak day of September 29, 1886. Days bleak or radiant—life in this little village is cheerless; homes—full and apathetically despondent.

But on this day of September 29, 1886, one home sets the life of the 'Khoont world' a faster pace. To the whistling wind is added the rhythmic beat of a drum, the clash of cymbals and very many merry female voices raised in song. Villagers drift to the home of Manorath Pant, a *peshkar* in the Revenue Department in Garhwal. The few men hovering round pass the news to the new arrivals—the news of the birth of a

son to Manorath Pant. The women traverse the little home to the door of the cell wherein lie the mother and the child, shower on them bright smiles, exchange happy, meaningless chatter and join the circle round the singers to greet the little new-arrival.

A short, thin man, with small eyes and benign mouth, religious—in the very orthodox way of the nineteenth century Brahmin—and active, that was Manorath Pant, the hard working revenue official of Garhwal district on a meagre salary. His wife was a typical Hindu women and mother, quiet, industrious and infinitely self-effacing.

Not many months after his arrival at Khoont they took away little Govind and his elder sister Daoki to live in Chakata, in Bhimtal, nine miles from Naini Tal. Here, in this village of Chakata, surrounded by the lakes, lived the mother and her Govind till he was four-year old, while the father was in Garhwal, visiting them frequently.

When Govind was four-year old he came to Almora to live with his maternal grand-father, Rai Bahadur Pandit Badri Datt Joshi, "*Sadarameen*" or Judicial Officer of Kumaun. Sir Ramsay MacDonald was then the Commissioner of Kumaun Division and as such its governor for all practical purposes. Rai Bahadur

Leader of Swaraj Party



Pandit Badri Datt Joshi had made himself Sir Ramsay's right hand man.

Govind's primary education was conventional and he showed no outstanding talents until he was in the VIII Standard. In the Lower Middle class he stood first, achieving distinction in English, Mathematics and Sanskrit. He passed his High School Examination in the first division; so also his Intermediate Examination for which he received a scholarship. Govind did particularly well in Mathematics.

Govind Ballabh Pant's unique personality, such as it developed later found its earliest expression in being one of the leading figures of the Hope Club. The Hope Club was a 'secret society' founded at Almora by the late Pandit Pooran Chandra Tiwari, an official of the Education Department. The membership of the Club was restricted to only about half a dozen students.

Members of the Hope Club met in the utmost secrecy in a closely guarded room at Dubkia at the residence of the founder. The activities of the members included periodic reviews of the political situation of the country and discussions on the ways and means of overthrowing British Imperialism. Presidentship was by rotation. Fiery speeches were delivered denouncing the British

rule in India and exhorting a war of independence to free the country. Young Govind always took a prominent part in these deliberations.

The young Pant had a passion for music and was easily stirred by "*Behag*" or "*Bheempalasi*". He also made it a point to take part in the Debating Society, which held its meetings in the *Almora Akhbar* buildings, and perhaps he was at his best at that place. He had a passion for books. He always grasps thoroughly the subject he goes through even casually. The books which drew young Pant most at that time were chiefly serious works, though later in life he could even give some of his time to Marel Correlli's novels.

Young Pant was never smart in his student days. He was rather lazy and irregular. Nothing was systematic about him and cultivated few habits. He was a prey to moods and often felt very restless.

When Pant secured scholarship in the Intermediate examination his people decided to send him to Allahabad. They wanted him to become a lawyer and the most they expected of him was that he would become a deputy collector. So the unsophisticated young lad made preparations for his departure. It was the turning period of his life.

He was very orthodox, as all people then were. These Brahmins from the hills could not take food cooked by even the Brahmins of the plains. So Pant and some other hill students started for Allahabad with a cook. He was admitted to the Muir Central College and joined the B. A. class with Mathematics and Political Science as his optional subjects.

India was then passing through a period of renaissance. Stirring ideas swayed her. "Lal, Pal and Bal" (Lajpat Rai, B. C. Pal and Balgangadhar Tilak) had fired the imagination of the people. A great upheaval followed the Bengal partition. The Swadeshi campaign was in full swing. Gokhale and Malaviya were the moderates of that period while "Lal, Pal and Bal" really roused the youth.

The Benares session of the Congress in 1905 was a momentous one. When Mahatma Gandhi (then Mr. Gandhi) rose to speak he was hooted down by the extremists. It was on the Indian question in South Africa. They wanted Surendranath Banerjee to speak. That was too much for Gokhale. He deplored the attitude of the young audience, and it was then that he made that prophetic statement: 'Remember! Mr. Gandhi is the coming man of India'.

Govind Ballabh attended the Congress session. It made a profound impression on him. It was then that for the first time he saw his political 'Guru'. To understand Gokhale is to understand Pant. Both are the "gentleman" of Cardinal Newman. Though young Pant's imagination centered round "Lal, Pal and Bal" his soul was wedded to Gokhale. The unfathomable suaveness and gentleness that formed the part of his being have never deserted him. He had also met Malaviya. It was spiritual rebirth for him and he felt that he had come to his journey's end.

But there was a struggle. The youth in him could not resist the call from the extremist camp. There was glamour in "Lal, Pal and Bal" and that found response in his youthful heart. That youth in him was consumed with fire, but failed to find the camp in which to stay. By temperament the Malaviya-Gokhale tone appealed to him. In Gokhale he discovered the 'logic', which had been a passion with him and a passion for facts and figures which happily has never deserted him. In Malaviya he found the classical Hindu gentleman. So he was on the cross roads.

In the Hindu Hostel of the Allahabad University Pant was in agony, unable to make up his mind regarding his place in politics. In the meanwhile,

a group of youngmen had made him their political leader. They called it the 'Pant group'. Once, on a certain issue there was a difference between the extremists and the moderates. The 'Pant group' invited B. C. Pal to address them. He came to Allahabad. The moderates were furious. They would not allow the meeting to be held in the hostel. So it was arranged in the compound of the late Mr. Hari Mohan Roy. They later invited Tilak and Lajpat Rai also.

The 'Pant group' openly preached revolt. The Bengal partition had generated hatred against the British. The atmosphere was tense. Students were not allowed to take part in the political activities. Pant was indignant and defiant. *Swadeshi* and *sugar boycott* were the main political activities of the young students. In the Magh Mela, he and Har Govind Pant (now M. L. A) delivered fiery speeches. That was too much for the university authorities, and they disallowed them to sit for their examinations

The incident caused a stir. Surendranath Banerjee, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and others took up the case of the 'young rebels'. Prof. Cox, whose favourite student Pant was, also put in a word for him. The agitation against the university authorities proved fruitful. The orders against those students were

with-drawn and they were allowed to take their examination.

Pant passed his examination in the second division. He then took to the study of law. At the same time he organised a secret society at Allahabad. The late Mr. Ramanand Chatterji was its president. He made valuable contacts with some prominent leaders. In debates he was in forefront and had committed to memory the speeches of Gokhale and Madan Mohan Malaviya to the surprise of all

Pant's college days were not wholly the days of all seriousness. They were punctuated by laughter and youthful frolic. The young disciple of Gokhale could be gay and resourceful on occasions. Besides, he and his friends had exhausted themselves in their political activities. Their preparation for the examinations was inadequate. Some way must be found out. A dead rat in the hostel came to the rescue. They spread the rumour that plague had broken out in the Hindu Hostel. The authorities did not know the secret. They took it to be the fact and closed the University, giving Pant and his friends time to study.

It was 1909. Pant stood first in his LL. B. examination and was awarded Lumsdon medal.

The pandit was very conscious of his civic rights

A. A. School Boy



from his very student days. Once, during vacation he, along with many other students, boarded a train for Kathgodam. Suddenly, a police party appeared on the scene and asked Pant and other students to get down. Some students yielded but Pant refused to leave the compartment. The police threatened to use violence. Pant argued with policemen and told them how unjust, unwise and ungentlemanly their conduct was. The policemen were impressed and quietly left for some other compartment.

Pant was married in 1898 when he was a student of the Allahabad University. It is said when a son was born to him he went to the Alfred Park and wept. He felt that a son should be born only in free India.

Pant had hardly finished his student life when he suffered a bereavement in the death of his wife. He married again. The second wife too did not live long. He married for the third time. He is now blessed with a son and two daughters—Raja, Lachchi and Pushpa.

Pant is immensely devoted to his family. He loves children and talks to them at their own level with gusto on subjects which concern the children. His consort is a typical Hindu wife. During his imprisonment in Ahmednagar Fort, she led an austere life.

She can not understand why people go to prison and how they suddenly become premiers. She is bewildered by the rise of her husband. She yearns for the peace of her soul. But Pant is nevertheless a very considerate husband and always speaks highly of her. His joy, his love, his yearning—he has transferred to his children with whom he always behaves like a grown-up baby. He is keenly interested in all their activities and takes pain to give them his very best.

In 1909 Govind Ballabh Pant had finished his student career. He had his fill from the spiritual fountain and lived in the paradise of his ideals. But his relations now demanded solid return for the money spent on his education.

The would-be-premier, therefore, went to Almora and joined the bar there. He had such a thorough mastery of law and clarity of thought that it did not take him long to establish his reputation. He could say hard things as well as argue elaborately. The people soon recognised that a new star had risen on the legal firmament of Almora.

Almora, which was then a stronghold of feudal officialdom, did not suit him. He first moved to Ranikhet, then Kashipur, and finally to Naini Tal. He

was responsible for the establishment of the Udaı Raj High School at Kashipur and his work as chairman of that institution won for him general respect and gratitude.

In 1916, at Almora, some people founded the Kumaun Parishad. Pant was the brain behind it. The aim of this institution was the political, social and economic advancement of Kumaun.

In 1907, ^{P117} the *Almora Akhbar*, one of the oldest newspapers in the province, was suspended by the Government. The young lawyer from Kashipur decided to bring out another paper in its place and with the assistance of some of his friends he brought out the *Shakti*—a nationalist weekly—from Almora.

In 1918 Pant arranged for a session of the Kumaun Parishad at Haldwani to consider the problem of *kuli begar*. The government officials used to force any villager they chose to work for them as a *kuli* without any payment. They forced levies on foodstuffs. The villagers were never secure. Petty officials thrived in the villages. The population was terrorised and had lost all capacity for resistance.

The Parishad served a notice on the Government that *kuli begar* must cease within two years but with no effect. In 1920 another session of the Parishad

was held which gave the Government an ultimatum. The result of this was that externment orders were served on the leaders of the Parishad. This led to the people resorting to drastic action. In 1921 40,000 people assembled at the annual fair of Bageswar, in the interior of Kumaun, to challenge the Government. Government files were seized and thrown into the river Saryu and the people took a solomon oath that no longer would they tolerate *kuli begar*. The Government acquiesced and ultimately abolished the '*kuli begar*.' /

To Pant the lawyer's life had little appeal, although as a lawyer he got succes with wealth. His cross-examinations, while thorough and searching, were never impertinent. Monetary considerations, however, could little influence him. He was fond of chess and the tactics and strategy he employed in his legal practice were similar to that he used to employ in the game.

As a lawyer he was at the zenith in the Kakori case. He established the highest reputation for his succesful defence of Kakori prisoners which was one of the most sensational political cases of the time and in which the prosecution was represented by the late J. N. Mulla, the leading and distinguished lawyer of Oudh. Pant displayed there his talents of the hghest

The Young Govind



order. The case brought out the best in him. He worked hard in this case. His fame was established and he found himself a man of provincial importance.

But in 1921 came the call of Mahatma Gandhi. It was a clear call. Mahatma Gandhi asked the lawyers to leave practising. Pant did so in the spirit of sacrifice. Since that time he had been consistent, though he appeared here and there in certain cases. Since 1921 he devoted all his time for the benefit of the nation. Today Pant is a financial cripple. Almost all his property has been sold, his children are unprovided for. People might make any estimate of the man but none can deny that it entailed a great sacrifice.

In his spare time Pant was busy in studying the works of Dadabhai, Ranade, Herbert Spencer, Huxley, and Dickens. Thackeray and Marie Corelli were his favourite authors while a devout student of Gita and the Hindu epics.

Pant never inspired fiery emotions among his followers. As an organiser, however, he was efficient and he succeeded in building a Congress organisation in the very heart of bureaucracy. In 1916 he was elected to the All-India Congress Committee and since

then he has been a member of that body. As a member of the All-India Congress Committee he has been modest. He never tried to take prominent office there.

When the Montford scheme was to be introduced in the provinces Kumaun was faced with a grave crisis. This was a momentous hour, for the people of this place. Pant took up their cause. He appeared before the Southborough Committee and pleaded the case for Kumaun with such force and lucidity that the Committee decided not to exclude Kumaun from the operation of reforms. For this service alone he has made Kumaun his eternal debtor !

The introduction of the Montford Reforms produced a new situation in the country. The Swaraj Party, however, managed to carry the day. In the United Provinces Pandit Motilal Nehru was in search of a capable man who could be given responsible office of the party leader in the province.

In the meanwhile Govind Bollabh Pant had made his own programme. In 1921 he stood for election to the U. P. Council. He was opposed by Rai Sahib Narain Dutt Chimuwal who was supported by the bureaucracy and the vested interests. Pant was defeated.

In the election to the chairmanship of the District Board also Pant suffered defeat against this gentleman.

Pandit Motilal Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant came in contact with each other when the former came to Naini Tal and stayed at Krishnapur. Pant made an excellent impression on him and it was here that he (G. B. Pant) first saw Jawaharlal Nehru, who then lived like a prince. This was the beginning of an abiding affection between the two.

The U. P. Council met. The question arose about the organisation of the party. Pant suggested that the organisation of the party be entrusted to a committee composed of some of its members and some Congressmen from outside the Council.

Govind Ballabh Pant was elected leader of the Congress Party in the Council and continued to be so till 1929. It was a well-knit party and thoroughly disciplined. He was obviously the best parliamentarian there. He was well posted with facts and figures and was well aware of the needs of the masses.

In the Council he had a rival in the late Sir C. Y. Chintamani. In debating skill both were masters. Pant was gentleman but at times could be furious and a terror to the I. C. S. C. Y. Chintamani suffered often on account of his followers having no programme.

C. Y. Chintamani and Govind Ballabh, however, remained fast and loyal friends throughout. Chewing,

betels vigorously C. Y. Chintamani would affectionately place his hands on Pant's shoulder and put their heads together in close parley.

The Nawab of Chattari is also a close friend of Govind Ballabh Pant since his Council days. So is Dr. Sita Ram. It is difficult to say if the Congress Party succeeded in wrecking the Constitution from within as it had avowed, but its propoganda value was great. Considerable credit for it goes to Pant for pleading the cause of farmers. In the Agra Tenancy Bill his was the main contribution. His work in the U. P. Council was recognized by his friends and opponents alike. Even the Government had to admit that "his technical skill was considerable". Slowly but steadily Pant was rising in the political horizon. In 1927, he was elected President of the U. P. C. C. at Aligarh. He was now in the thick of the battle. His fame had travelled far. In 1928 he went up in revolt. The Simon Commission was an insult to the nation's self-respect. He along with others decided to stage a black-flag demonstration against it.

Jawaharlal Nehru and Pant led the procession at Lucknow. The police made a merciless *lathi* charge on the demonstrators. Nehru and Pant also were not spared. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his autobiography, gives

The Rebel



us a vivid account of the incident. "Govind Ballabh Pant who stood by me", writes Nehru. "offered a much bigger target, being six feet odd in height, and the injuries he received then have resulted in a painful and persistent malady and prevented him for a long time from straightening his back or leading an active life "

This incident produced a deep impression on Govind Ballabh Pant and he now decided to give an open fight to the Government. The opportunity presented itself in 1930 when Mahatma Gandhi launched his *Salt Satyagraha*. Pant took an active part in this movement. He was arrested and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. He was incarcerated in the Dehra Dun prison. He left elaborate instructions behind. The following extracts from his instructions are interesting as evidence of his attention to details :

"Enlistment of volunteers should be carried on incessantly. Some of the volunteers trained or required should be left at their residence to carry on this work and to register new members and to train them locally. There must be as much decentralisation as possible ; but volunteers should meet occasionally at some suitable centre.....

"Salt should be manufactured at Naihi Tal and

at all other places. The volunteers should assemble with national flags at the place where salt is to be manufactured.....Volunteers should not yield the salt made by them if attempt is made to snatch it..... They must remain non-violent under gravest provocationA batch of five volunteers with national flags will start at 6 a. m. from the Satyagraha camp singing national songs, such as *Bande Mataram*, and *Jhanda Uncha Rahe Hamara*, and raising non-violent shouts of *Bande Mataram*, *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai* and *Swatantra Bharat ki jai*. The procession will pass through Talli Tal and the Mall Road to the temple or direct to the Rainsela ground where it will disperse.

"The public are requested not to follow the volunteers but to see their progress from their respective places . and in case they choose to follow them they should leave the left half of the road free for traffic and to keep at a distance at least 30 yards from the volunteers.....If the volunteers are arrested the Police should not be hampered in any way".

With the Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931, Pant found himself a free man. He developed something of the soldier in him and was now in for any suffering. In the U. P. a serious situation arose. In the words of the author of the "History of the Congress", "accordingly

the Congressmen in the U. P. were all marked and made the victims of the wrath of the Zamindars and Talukedars with the active support of the Government... ..

"Immediately after the Delhi settlement, the United Provinces Congress Committee put themselves in touch with the Provincial Government. A large number of letters were exchanged. Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was specially appointed by the Provincial Committee to bring to the notice of the Government the various grievances of the people and put before them the view point of the Congress. The continuing agrarian crisis particularly occupied the attention of the Provincial Congress Committee.....Both Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had several interviews with the Chief Secretary and other officials."

The Provincial Congress Committee referred the whole agrarian problem to a special committee. The committee was known as the Pant Committee and its report was published in September 1931. Pant managed the whole affair very skilfully. The report was very comprehensive and speaks volumes for brilliant diagnosis of the agrarian crisis.

Govind Ballabh Pant employed himself in the

constructive work of the province. His health deteriorated more by the work in connection with the opposition to the Simon Commission. Then came the Second Round Table Conference, which again disillusioned the country. But this time he was a full-fledged disciple of Mahatma Gandhi.

The year nineteen hundred and thirty-two found Govind Ballabh Pant again in the Bareilly jail. He was lodged in the *Gadha Barrack* with Jawaharlal Nehru and later transferred with him to Dehra Dun jail. They had a good company there.

Nehru was then writing his autobiography and showed Pant the manuscript. Pant read it as if it were an overdue letter from a dear friend. Perhaps that was then his only consolation there for he suffered from lumbago and came out in shattered health.

✓ The Congress Party needed a debator of the first rank whom it wanted to send to the Central Assembly. The choice fell on Pant. Soon after his release from the prison he was elected to the Central Assembly from the *Ruhailkhand* and *Kumaon rural constituency*. Pant's debating power was well known but none expected that he would have such meteoric rise. Though in the Assembly he did not take part in every debate, yet it was in his speech on the budget that he surpassed

himself. It made his future. All agreed that it was magnificent. It had the Gokhale touch with the marshalling of his facts and figures. It was considered the best since Gokhale's own speeches with the difference that it had a pessimistic pungency which Gokhale always avoided.

Pant's speeches have not the eloquence of Bhulabhai nor the bluntness of Satyamurti. He has, however, a mathematical precision, an economy of language and a logic which he alone can wield with effect. He gave an uncomfortable time to treasury benches. His wordy duels with Sir James Grigg enlivened the Assembly proceedings. In the Assembly he was considered an expert on finance and was expected to be the first Finance Minister in the Free Republic of India.

Pant was the deputy leader of the Congress Party in Central Assembly, while Bhulabhai Desai was its leader. The leader and his deputy had a deep respect for each other, Bhulabhai Desai had always a soft corner for him and was aware of his weak points. When Pant became the Premier of the U. P., Bhulabhai Desai enquired of Badri Datt Pande (then M. L. A.): 'Is Pant still punctual in his unpunctuality and regular in his irregularity?'

Govind Ballabh Pant did not remain for long in the

Assembly. In the provinces the Act of 1935 was about to be introduced. They needed an elderly statesman in the province who would be thoroughly in touch with the problems of the United Provinces. The U. P. was a difficult province. It was the strong-hold of the left-wing congressmen with an acute agrarian problem and strongly entrenched zamindars. It was necessary to offset the radical politics of the left-wing congressman. In the United Provinces there were undoubtedly many talented Congressman but the choice fell on Pant.

^ In the year 1937 Pant resigned from the Central Assembly and was elected to the U. P. Assembly from the Bareilly and 'Four Cities General Urban Constituency. He became the Premier of the United Provinces in July 1937 and continued in office up to November 1939. His was a very difficult position. The situation in the province was very tense and the U. P. was, politically and economically, one of the most inflammable provinces in India.

The most difficult task before him was the handling of the communal hatred let loose by the followers of Mohamad Ali Jinnah. The position of the Muslim League was strengthened by union with the zamindars. The Shia-Sunni dispute was yet another problem.

The I. C. S. ring looked upon the *Dhoti Ministry*

with open defiance. Unsympathetic I. C. S. men went so far as to label the ministry as a Brahmin Ministry. The main source of trouble lay in the fact that the British Government was not prepared to allow the Ministry to interpret the 1935 Act other than as considered necessary by the I. C. S.

The Premier, however, won many battles by his tact and inexhaustible patience. But in April 1938, the Cabinet was faced with crisis. The issue was the release of the political prisoners. The Governor insisted that his decision must prevail. Pant refused to be dictated and resigned. Later the resignation was withdrawn upon an agreement being reached between the Premier and the Governor.

In November 1939, the Ministry resigned in protest against India not being consulted prior to declaration of war on behalf of India. His career as Premier came to an end.

The Pirpur report had something fantastic to say about the Pant Ministry and this report provoked a fighting speech from an ex-governor of the U. P. who paid high tributes to the integrity and hard work of the U. P. Ministry. It would not be wrong to say that the U. P. Ministry, and particularly premier Pant, was generous to the Muslims. Even the *Dawn*, the

Muslim League organ and ardent supporter of Mohammad Ali Jinnah admitted the fact.

The U. P. Ministry had successfully piloted in the legislature some progressive bills. No where in India any Congress Ministry had done so much for tenants as in the United Provinces. In the matter of release of political prisoners U. P. took a very firm stand. The Tenancy Bill and the Debt Redemption Bill were great achievements of this Ministry.

Premier Pant also served the country as Secretary of the Central Parliamentary Board, to which office he was appointed in 1937. His work as Secretary of this body enhanced his reputation and demonstrated his capacity for organisation.

It was at Tripuri Congress, however, that Pant had his phenomenal success and meteoric rise. At Tripuri the gods had conspired to place him in an exceedingly difficult position.

It is for history to decide whether the Pattabhi issue was worthy of Mahatma Gandhi or whether Subhas Bose had not taken an idealistic view of practical politics. Whatever the issue might have been the one clear issue was whose voice should count—Mahatma Gandhi's or Subhas Bose's. It was a momentous hour for the Congress.

The opposition was a seasoned one. It maintained its poise and made silent preparations for a frontal attack. Who would bell the cat? It was a problem. Patel was an "unpopular" figure and in that mass hysteria his blunt speech would have further exasperated the audience. 'C. R.' would have been subtle but he was too intellectual for the house. They were Gandhi's men. Pant was ideal in many ways. He was well-received in the ranks of the right-wingers as well as the left-wingers. Few thought he belonged to the charmed inner circle of the Congress, High Command. He has an amiability of temper which had endeared him to all.

So the resolution was moved by Pant. It must have been a most critical moment in his life. He had great affection and respect for Subhas Bose. But he was always loyal to Mahatma Gandhi and proved it again. It was a brilliant performance. He appealed to the reason of the house. He pleaded that emotional issues should not be raised and that the Gandhian approach was the only solution. He made a moving appeal for unity in the Congress ranks and succeeded in carrying the house with him. #

Nineteen forty-four, took Govind Ballabh Pant back to prison. In 1940 Mahatma Gandhi launched

the individual satyagraha. In the U. P. Pant led it. He was the first person in the U. P. to start the movement. He was awarded one year's imprisonment. He was kept in the Almora jail where he led a peaceful and quiet life. He used to play badminton and devoted considerable part of his time to prayer and meditation. The jail authorities imposed certain restrictions on his interviews. This he thought was entirely uncalled for and therefore refused to avail of this privilege.

He was released in October 1941. The nation again needed his guidance in the negotiations with Stafford Cripps and in the end he advised the Congress High Command to reject the Cripps offer.

Then came the hectic days of the August movement. There was despair and frustration in the country and even in the Congress Party. The Congress passed the "Quit India" resolution. It was a resolution loaded with dynamite. The country was soon in flames of war of independence.

August 9, 1942 was the V-day for the Indian nation. Pant left Naini Tal for Bombay on August 2, 1942. He looked grim. He was asked what should the people do in case he was arrested. To this he rather gave a vague reply. "This time we have to come out of

the jaws of death", said the parliamentarian as he left for the battle front.

On the 9th of August when the arrest of the Congress leaders started, Pant and other Congress leaders including Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, President Abul Kalam Azad were arrested and taken to an unknown place. The movements of the leaders were kept a closely guarded secret for a long time. Only later it was known that they were kept in the Ahmednagar Fort. These were the days of untold agonies for the nation. The nation expressed its rage in the "Rebellion of 1942".

In the prison Pant got sufficient time for his scholarly pursuits. Nearly all the leaders completed some work in the prison. He also wrote something on the constitution of India. He spent major portion of his time in reading and also writing letters to his children and the rest of time to prayer. From Ahmednagar he regularly wrote letters to his children. The letters are rather of a utilitarian nature. They, however, reveal a mind which is precise and methodical. The letters also throw a floodlight on his character. They indicate how intensely human he is.

To his son Pant writes (May 25, 1943)—"Manjul"

*Manjul and Reeta are the son and daughter respectively of Dr. C. D. Pande, Private Secretary to Pant.

seems to be making rapid progress.....and will you give him a ball by way of prize on my behalf ? The old fairy was here again yesterday making enquiries about Reeta. This time she came with a big peacock, with shining golden plumage, red beak and long green tail three yards long. The wonderful bird has a fine throne of rubies and emeralds on her back. The fairy is prepared to come to Reeta if she agrees to fly back with her to this place on the throne the peacock carries firmly on her back. If she does not choose to stay here longer the peacock will take her back after a week and the fairy will then let her have the peacock throne. You may ascertain the wishes of Reeta."

In a letter to his son (March 10, 1943) he writes : "Have you made any plan for the *holi* ? I would gladly advise you to arrange for a children's party on this occasion.....you can invite all your friends and playmates along with other children of the mohalla".

In another letter (January 18, 1943) he makes his children to draw morals from games.".....I am glad to find that you captained one of the hockey teams. A captain has a special place and as the leader of the party he has a similar responsibility. He can succeed easily if he works in a true team-spirit. He should care more for his comrades than for himself. He should

organise and instruct his companions so that they may all work together. All members should learn the method by which they could best cooperate and join together individual efforts. It gives better results and causes less fatigue if one passes the ball on to his fellow player instead of driving it on singly to the goal."

At times heroes are so home-sick that they simply hunger for letters from home making no attempts to amuse children but to console themselves. For example, Pant writes to Lachhi and Raja jointly, his daughter and son of 16 and 15 years respectively :—

"My dear Lachchi and Raja,—This is Saturday today, but I have had no news about you so far this week. I think I got your last letter on the 15th instant. With the preparations for the new classes and the daily work in the school and at home you should be hard pressed for time. I can well understand your difficulty. But unusual delay makes me somewhat uneasy. I have got used of hearing from you at least once every week. I should like you to maintain this practice. If you cannot find time to write as fully as you wish to do ordinarily, you must just let me have a line to tell me that you are O. K.....Babu".

Thus Govind Ballabh Pant sought to keep himself going by writing letters to his children but his health

broke down. He developed hernia. There was a public demand for his release. He was repatriated to the United Provinces in March 1945. He proceeded to Delhi to consult the well-known surgeon of India Dr. Nilamber Chintamani Joshi. Dr. Joshi thought operation would be dangerous at the time and advised him to return to the hills and take complete rest.

He broke down completely. Suffering was writ large on his face. He did not return to normal health until after he became the premier next time.

He was not allowed to take rest for a long time. The scene changed again. This time it was not a march to prison but an invitation to Simla. In June 1945, Pant was invited to attend the Simla Conference. There he had talks with the League Chief, Mohamad Ali Jinnah and tried to bring him to the Congress point of view. The Pandit is very skilful negotiator but not skilful enough for Jinnah who is notorious for his obstinacy.

After his return from the Simla Conference he again immersed in work. The Labour Government had come to power and general elections in India were announced. He was a member of the Central Parliamentary Board and in the U. P. the chief of the Parliamentary Committee. This time in the U. P. they

decided to put up as many nationalist Muslim candidates as possible. A vigorous election campaign was launched with Pant working like the youthful Jawaharlal. He toured the whole province and addressed a dozen meetings a day on an average.

A great part of the success and efficiency of this election was due to Rafi Ahmad Kidwai—the strong and silent man of the U. P. In the U. P. they expected a much more spectacular success in the Muslim election areas. When the election results were announced there was a mild surprise as they had expected many more Nationalist Muslims in the Assembly. However, the Congress was able to annex more than a dozen seats. This was a great achievement considering the strength of the reactionary Muslim League. The Congress captured all the general seats.

Govind Ballabh Pant was again elected leader of the Congress Party in the U. P. Assembly. He was asked by the Governor to form a ministry in the province. The toughest job was the food problem but Pant with his usual calm faced it. Day and night he worked on an average, during the first three months of the ministry, about 16 hours a day. There was panic in the province. He made a broadcast on the food problem, assuring the people that "not

one man shall die of hunger in the U. P." His food procurement scheme was very successful and enhanced his reputation.

"Towers are known by their shadows and gentleman by their calumniators", so runs a proverb. Pant, however, has not many calumniators. In private life, Pant, while strictly observing the asceticism of the Gandhian school, is a typical cultured Kumaon brahmin. The Kumaon brahmins have their strong points as well as their feudal out look. He is hardly an exception to the many complexes from which the Kumaon brahmins suffer. He is very orthodox in religious matters. He devotes daily two hours to Sandhya, and perhaps as strongly believes in the rituals. In the social sphere he continues to cling to the past. He cannot break away from that. The clannish spirit is strong among Kumaon brahmins; even Pant has to struggle at times to be free from those feudal emotions.

Between 1920—30 his drawing room was the meeting place of the elite of Naiqi Tal and also of the distinguished personages of all-India fame. While he would be busy discussing politics with men like C. Y. Chintamani, his other friends would be busy in playing some indoor games, like chess or cards.

Occasionally, even while deeply engrossed in discussions involving high politics, he would find time to suggest some formula to a friend engaged in the game of chess. He used to take equal lively interest in various subjects from politics to Vedant philosophy and to high Hindi poetry.

Pant is not very punctual or regular in his daily life. Trains have been delayed many times due to him. Indolence is a part of his nature. Perhaps his physique has something to do with it.

Pant has been intensely busy all these twenty years. It would intrigue people to learn that some of his best works have been done in his lavatory. In the Lucknow Secretariate all the important files used to be placed in his bathroom and the Premier used to study them there. One cannot say why he remains in bathroom for such a long—he generally comes out after one hour or two !!

Pant is always surrounded by people. They come to see him from far and near. He does not see people individually—he meets them in groups. He is very courteous. To those whom he knows he is very intimate and makes a thorough enquiry about each and every one of his family. He possesses a very warm heart. Whenever he meets people whom he loves his eyes shine

and his face radiates with joy. He loves children and is almost religious in his devotion.

Pant can laugh, he can enjoy a joke and loves fun, laughter and gaiety. His humour is always rather of the subtle type. Once some gentleman of Naini Tal was discussing a certain point. An elderly gentleman, a superintendent of police, was also in the party and he was dictatorial in his judgment. Pant happened to be there. Some of the present asked him to say how he felt about the S. P.'s attitude. He paused a little and said : " It does not befit me, young man, to speak when there are so many elders before me. However, as you want me to speak, I shall. The *sastras* tell us that we should keep ourselves so many steps behind certain animals, *e. g.*, four steps behind a donkey, six behind an elephant and five behind a horse". And then pointing towards the superintendent of police he said : "For his class also the *sastras* have fixed some steps" !

There is another story which shows that Pant can even now relish school-boy pranks. While in one of His Majesty's prisons he had a certain friend whom he once found deeply engrossed in *sandhya* (evening prayer). He had a picture of a cinema actress. Quietly he rose, took the picture and placed it before

the closed eyes of his friend "*rishi*". Soon the "*rishi*" opened the eyes and to his horror he found himself worshipping a cinema actress. Out came Pant from a corner and in a raised scolding voice said : " What a shame Pandit ?.....In these declining years of yours you are worshipping a cinema actress ! I expected better things from you ".

Prof. Harold, J. Laski's description of a certain great man is equally applicable to Pant. This is what Prof. Laski writes :

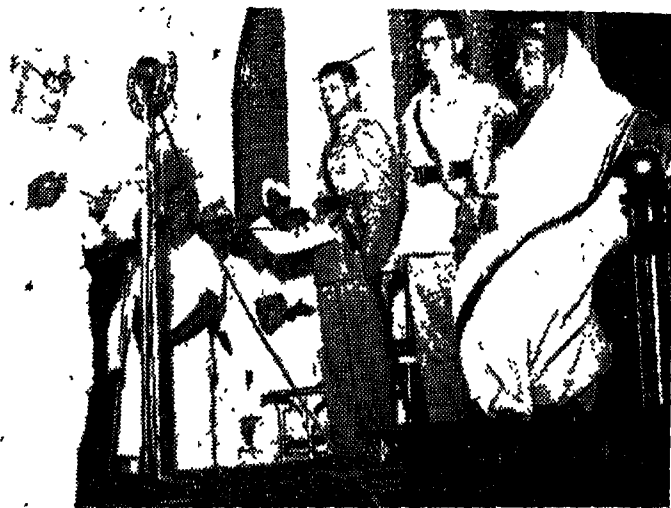
"He is fundamentally a religious man without ever emphasizing his religious principles. He hates cruelty to the individual...He loaths bombast and rhetoric... Behind the appearance of directive and simplicity he is shrewd, and decisive at his best in a moment of crisis..... At bottom a really lazy man, he is capable at the proper time of immense and sustained energy...He is always capable of restraint ; his anger is emphatic and loses by a deliberate effort of will. He knows how to gain friends, whether among subordinates or colleagues. He is capable of infinite tenderness ; and has moments of really supreme generosity.....So it is that he cannot approach the analysis of social problems as, for example, a Marxist would approach them because he is literally incapable of understanding how

a man can be Marxist.....He thinks of the great capitalists as trustees for the public.....It is indolence that persuades him too often to be content with second rate associates.....Integrity, devotion, high purpose, directness—all these he has in abundance".

That is Pandit Govind Ballobh Pant, of course, not the Premier, but when in the office he does not leave himself behind.

—GAGAN—K. S.

The Freedom Dawn



Pt. Pant taking oath of allegiance before Governor Naidu.

[— Courtesy "Patrika"

APPENDIX

Pant's Freedom Message

Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Premier of U. P., gave the following message to the people of his province on August 15, 1947, the historic occasion of the achievement of freedom :—

I am glad to offer you my cordial greetings on this historic occasion. It marks our journey's end and the attainment of our cherished goal. Independence is no longer a dream : it is a reality. I welcome you to the free state of Union of India. Henceforward we are free to shape our destiny. No one will stand in our way. There will be no vestige of foreign power or alien rule anywhere in our country. We will be complete masters of our household. Sovereignty will be vested in the people and their representatives will control and regulate the affairs of the state in all its branches. We will realize Swaraj and the government of the people by the people for the people will be not a theoretical maxim but will be in active operation in the fullest sense hereafter.

In this hour of our victory we have reason to be humble. We know our limitations and but for the mercies of Providence we could not have accomplished

what He in His bounty has been pleased to grant us. We bow our heads and pray that He may show us the light and guide us in our onward march in the free India so that our people may enjoy the fruits of freedom in an abundant measure. We have achieved this freedom through the sacrifice and sufferings of millions of patriots who worked for this end ceaselessly and devoted their all to this great cause. A good many among them are no more in our midst. Many martyrs gave their very lives to enable us to enjoy the fruits of their selfless sacrifice. To all brave men women and children whose heroic deeds have brought us this triumph we offer our profound gratitude. Their memories will ever be enshrined in the history of our country and they will be remembered for their noble contribution by all of us and our children and children's children. It is a matter of great joy and gratification to us that the father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi, under whose inspiring, saintly and sublime leadership this emancipation from foreign yoke of four hundred millions of our countrymen has been achieved by the Indian national Congress is still in our midst. ~~He~~^{He} is the architect of our freedom and the nation looks up to him for guidance in the tasks that lie ahead. The edifice of free India will rest on secure foundations

designed and laid by him.

India has been reborn in the midst of travail and turmoil, but today we are observing the dawn of the new era. Everything should change now and the change should be for the better. The old order must yield place to the new and to a better one. The fight against foreign domination is over. There is no foreign adversary and no obstacle from outside to impede our progress, but we have to shake off the torpor of ages. We have to stimulate the dormant energy and to harness the immense manpower of India so that life everywhere may be fully revived and revitalised. We have still to carry on a ceaseless and organised struggle against poverty, illiteracy, disease and superstition. Healthy democracy can function only with the active and conscious co-operation of every citizen. All our people have to be roused out of their placidity so that their talents and energy, skill and resources may be mobilised for the progress and advancement of this ancient race and the world may witness the flowering of the genius of India and the fulfilment of our great mission.

The Union of India will have almost the largest population in the world. Its future is assured and it will soon secure a very eminent place in the comity of nations. It is going to be a great republic wherein,

according to the declared and accepted objective, all power and authority shall vest in the people and where- in social, economic and political justice, equality of status and of opportunity, and freedom of thought, faith and worship shall be guaranteed to all the people and adequate safeguards shall be provided for minorities and depressed and other backward classes, so that all may have a share in making their full contribution to the promotion of world peace and the welfare of mankind. Every citizen of new India will work with vigour and zeal for the re-construction of new social order based on justice, fairplay, equality and fraternity, so that our Union may attain distinction not only in the material but also in the spiritual field./

We in this province have stupendous task before us. We have to liquidate the accumulated arrears of ages and overcome the apathy and to stimulate dynamic energy all round. We lag behind many other provinces in many matters that matter. We have to carry the torch of light to every home and hamlet and to ensure the fullest opportunity for the social, economic and cultural progress of all who reside in this land. The interest of the masses must necessarily receive the foremost consideration in every plan of re-construction. No sound edifice can be constructed otherwise.

Outside Chamber



[—Courtesy "Patrika"

Most of our people live in villages and our bold peasantry will be our real pride. We aim at making every farmer intrepid, self-respecting, prosperous and wide awake. With this object in view we have decided to abolish the obsolete agrarian system and we hope to achieve this purpose soon.

The strength of the province next to the peasantry lies in its workers, and special care will have to be taken so that conditions of life may be fuller and richer for both, exploitation may cease, nationalization of public utility concerns may be ensured, the resources of the province may be developed in a systematic and organized manner, modern methods of agriculture may be introduced and the depleted cattle wealth of the country on which depends to a large measure the yield of our soil and the nourishment, especially of the children, the infirm and the old, may be conserved improved and developed.

The economic rehabilitation in the new order will be secured through a net-work of co-operatives spread all over the land and large schemes for the generation of electric energy for the irrigation of extensive tracts and growth of new industries will also have to be undertaken. Some of them are already in train. We have to ensure the well-known four freedoms for every citizen

which include complete freedom from fear and want. We wish to train our youth effectively and methodically in the art of self-defence and certain measures have already been initiated for this purpose.

Our cultural heritage is rich and varied. We have every reason to be proud of it. It has not received the attention it deserved under foreign rule. It will be our privilege to foster the cultural renaissance of which we see signs all around us. We have to regain our soul in its pristine purity and fulness. Outlandish features which owed their existence to alien support cannot thrive in the refreshing breeze of freedom. All that is a misfit will have to give place to what accords with the genius of the people. Our language, our ways of life will have to be in tune with our traditions and our innate culture.

The vast majority of the people of this province are Hindus. I should like on their behalf to assure the minorities of fullest protection, justice and fairplay. Our State will be based on the twin pillars of justice and righteousness (*dharma*) which has sustained us throughout our chequered history and whosoever deviates from them will do so at his peril. All will have equal rights and equal opportunities and no one will be prejudiced in any way on the ground of his

creed or caste. The fundamental rights already adopted by the Constituent Assembly leave no doubt on this point. In a civilized society a citizen owes everything to the State and his life, his liberty, his possessions and his culture are all dependent on the wholesome strength and might of the State, and faithful and unconditional loyalty to the State is the foundation of all rights and condition precedent to their enjoyment.

At this historic moment when we are re-affirming our firm resolve and re-building the social order on an equitable basis we invite the active co-operation of all sections of the population, so that this province, which is well-known for its mellowed wisdom and which has always occupied a unique position in the political, cultural and social life of this country, may make adequate contribution and secure a rightful place in the land.

Before I close, I should like to say a few words about our public services. Public servants were in a difficult position in the past, when there was a conflict between loyalty to a foreign government and real service of the people. That embarrassing state is now happily over. There need be no room for misunderstanding between the public and their servants hereafter and he who serves the people with devotion,

zeal, integrity and impartiality will be not only winning popular goodwill and confidence but also ensuring his own advancement. Their task is not easy and the memories of the past will continue to linger at least for some time. But all the same they have to stick to the right to be just and impartial to protect the weak and to befriend the needy. They have to take care particularly to avoid all pitfalls and to steer clear and to keep calm in the midst of communal storms which have caused so much of wreckage in several parts of our country.

I am confident that there will be a change in the attitude of the public who are ultimately the masters of the services which can achieve the desired results only through the appreciation and support of the right-minded citizens. I offer you all my hearty congratulations and best wishes. Jai Hind : Bande Mataram.